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**I. Puthiadam**

# **VIṢṆU THE EVER FREE**

**A Study of the Mādhva Concept of God**

**DIALOGUE SERIES**

**MADURAI, MADRAS, VARANASI**



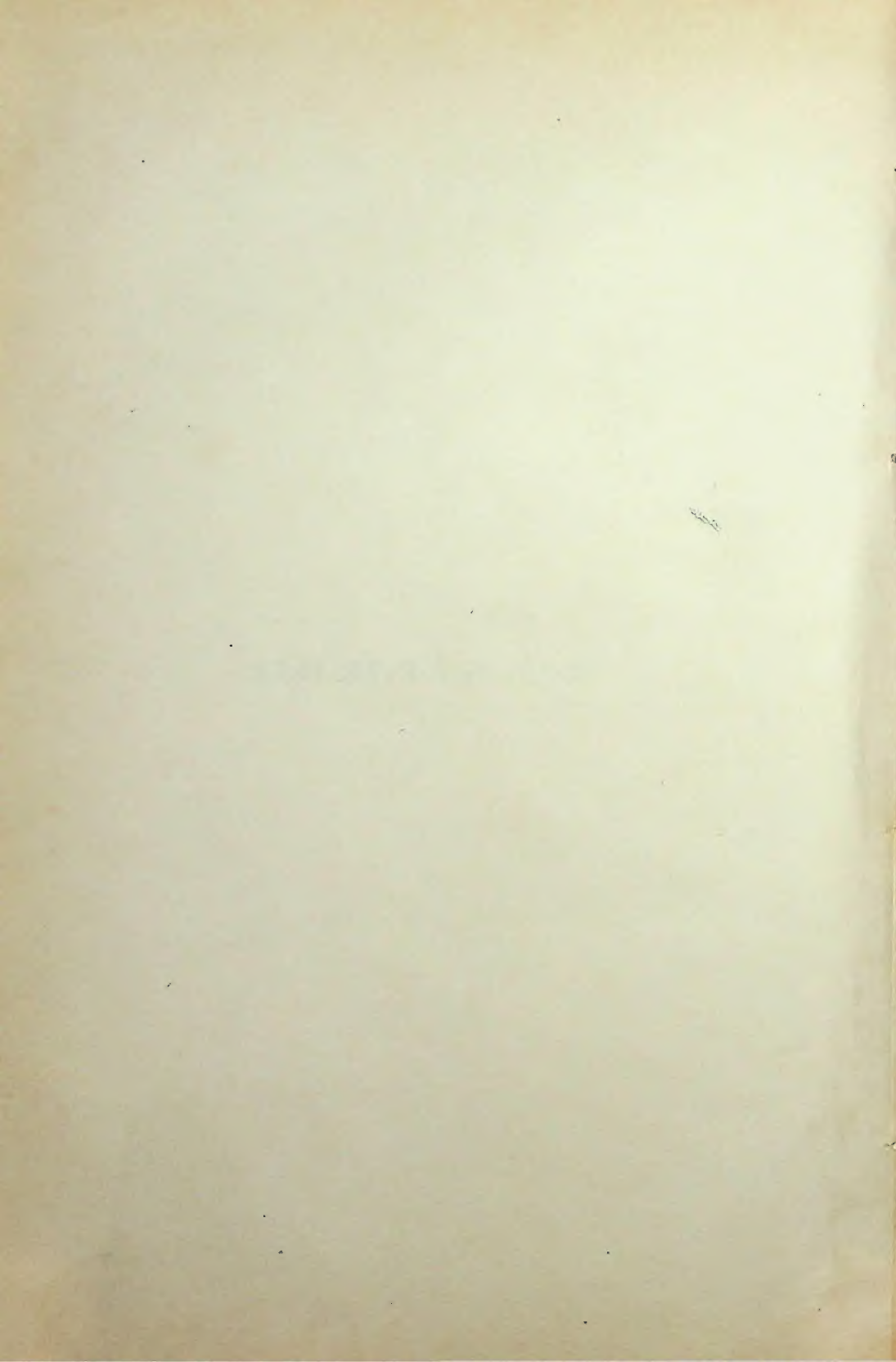
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## **I. PUTHIADAM**

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Madurai, Madras, Varanasi

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## DIALOGUE SERIES

This series intends to expose objectively, historically and sympathetically the various doctrinal and practical aspects of living religions and ideologies. It is a small contribution towards authentic dialogue among religious believers and others committed to the cause of Mán, with a view to the building of a more just and loving society. Dialogue Series is sponsored by the Philosophy Department, Arul Anander College, Madurai Kamaraj University, Aikya Alayam (Inter-religious Dialogue Centre) Madras and Maitri Bhavan (Dialogue Centre) Varanasi.

Bord of Editors : I. Puthiadam, C. Valiaveetil, I Hirudayam.

Emblem : Flame Chakra for Living Religions

At the centre is the Mystery of the Absolute which is inaccessible Light, but darkness to the human intellect and in-effable silence. The different Religions are represented by the appropriate symbols on the tongue of fire which remain separate on the surface, but have an essential underlying unity, being the expression of the same Supreme Light. Dialogue between Religions is not to stop with the externals of rites, doctrines etc , but must proceed to the experience of the Central Mystery where we all meet.

Fourteen Religions and ideologies are represented by their respective symbols in the chronological order of their origin.

- |                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| (1) Primeval Religions  | —Cosmic Tree  |
| (2) Animistic Religions | —Nāga (Snake) |
| (3) Chinese Religions   | —Yin/Yang     |
| (4) Zoroastrianism      | —Rising Sun   |
| (5) Hinduism            | —OM           |

(6) Judaism	—Star of David
(7) Shintoism	—Gate
(8) Jainism	—Swastika (Sun)
(9) Buddhism	—Chakra
(10) Christianity	—Christ-Anagram
(11) Islam	—Crescent and Star
(12) Sikhism	—Book
(13) Humanism	—Clasped Hands
(14) Marxism	—Machine Chakra.

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**GURUBHYAḤ SAMARPAYĀMI**





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## ABBREVIATIONS

AV	Anuvyākhyāna
B	Brahman
BSBh	Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya
Bh Gī	Bhagavadgītā
Bh Gī Bh	Bhagavadgītā Bhāṣya
Br Ā Up	Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad
BrĀ Up Bh	BrĀ Up Bhāṣya
Ch Up	Chandogya Upaniṣad
Ch Up Bh	Ch Up Bhāṣya
Īs Up	Īsopaniṣad
Īs Up†Bh	Īs Up Bhāṣya
Kaṭh Up	Kāthopaniṣad
Kaṭh Up Bh	Kaṭh Up Bhāṣya
M	Madhva (Rarely used)
M. V	Madhva Vijaya
Muṇḍ Up Bh	Muṇḍak Up Bhāṣya
NS	Nyāya Sudhā
Pr Dī	Prameya-Dīpikā
Prl	Pramāṇalakṣaṇa
Prl Ṭī	Prl. Ṭīkā
Ṛg V	Ṛg-Veda
S BSBh	Śankara BSBh
Tat Dī	Tattva-Dīpikā
Tat Pr	Tattva-Prakāśikā
V	Viṣṇu (Rarely used)
VTV	Viṣṇutattvavinirṇaya
VTV Ṭī	VTV Ṭīkā
WZKSOA	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sud-und Ostasiens



## INTRODUCTION

Śrī Madhvācārya, who is also known under the names of Ānandatīrtha and Pūrṇaprajaña, is considered to be the founder of the 'Dvaita' branch of vedāntic thought. Certainly, Madhva would not have thought of himself as the founder of Dvaita-Vedānta, but as its true exponent and defender. According to him 'dvaita' is the quintessence of all śruti and smṛti texts. It is the truth. No one founded it. Reality is 'dvaita'.

### Dates and Life

Madhva-Vijaya, which recounts in traditional and purāṇic terms, the life of Madhva, tells us that the names Pūrṇaprajaña and Ānandatīrtha were given to him by his 'guru' Acyutaprekṣa, whose advaitic teaching however, the disciple rejected. Madhva signs his works, under the name Ānandatīrtha (holy water(s) or sacred ford of ānanda). In Br. Ā Up Bh. VIII. 2 (perhaps a later interpolation) there is an explanation of the word 'Madhva'. 'Madhu', sweet, stands for ānanda; 'va' stands for 'holy water' or 'sacred ford'. So, 'madhva' in reality means ānandatīrtha. The word madhva means also the receptacle of sweetness or bliss.

According to some texts Madhva seems to have had 'the consciousness' that he was an 'avatāra' of god Vāyu. The avatāra of this god occurred, when Viṣṇu himself descended into our midst. In Treta Yuga, Vāyu appeared in this world as Hanumān to be the servant of Rāma. In Dvāpara Yuga, the same god came into this world as Bhīma to serve Kṛṣṇa. Vāyu's work in this world is to defend and propagate the truth of Hari hidden by the demons. In Kali Yuga, Vāyu has come in the form of Madhva to be at the service of Vyāsa. (VTV-last verses).

According to Madhva Vijaya (11,10-11), Madhva, was born in the village of Pājakakṣetra, a place not far from Udippi in Karṇāṭak. Udippi was the spiritual centre of Madhva's early life and later activity. His father was the Brāhmin, Naddantillāya (Sānskrit, Madhyageha) a great devotee of Ananteśvara of Udippi (Viṣṇu, the one who reposes on the great serpent). At the time of Madhva's birth and early life, the region around Udippi had a seizable group of persons, who followed the Bhāgavata-Pāñcarātra, vaiṣṇava tradition. The father of Madhva was no mean scholar in Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. He held recitations in the temple of Udippi and in his own village. He was honoured with the title of Bhaṭṭa (M. V. II. 14). Certainly, Madhva's own early interest in the Epics and in the Purāṇas can be partly explained by the influence of his father.

Already before the birth of Madhva, his native village was known for its devotion of Durgā. Udippi itself (according to M. V.; Rajata-pīṭha-pura) had an ancient saivite temple, Candramūlīśvara. It is quite possible that by the time of Madhva some of the Śaivites became devotees of Viṣṇu, taking Ananteśvara of Udippi as their refuge.

The influence of Bhāgavatapurāṇa on the vaiṣṇavite circles in and around Udippi before and after the time of Madhva cannot be denied. Moreover, there seems to have been a tendency among some of the devotees to worship the Supreme Being under the combined names : Śaṅkara Nārāyaṇa or Hari-Hara. Perhaps, Madhva was rejecting such syncretic practices when he made his sannyāsis promise : "I will never abandon Viṣṇavas (three times); even under the threat of death, will I recognise Hari to be equal to any other deity...." (B.N.K. Sharma Hist. Dv. Sch. Vol. 1, p. 253). In Mādhvism Śiva occupies a very elevated place in the hierachy of the gods. But he is far from being equal to Viṣṇu.

In the Kannada country among one group of Smārta Brāhmins, Advaita must have been the accepted doctrine.

Moreover, the existence and work of Sringeri Mutt must have also made Advaita a force among some of the important persons. So we have not to be surprised, if the teacher of Madhva was a follower of Śaṅkara's vedānta. But in the case of Madhva, his deep roots in the Vaiṣṇava tradition and his own personal experience of the personal God triumphed and bore abundant fruits.

The dates of Madhva's birth and death still remain a matter of controversy among scholars. Some scholars place the life span of Madhva between 1198-1278 and others between 1238-1317. The first opinion was proposed by R. G. Bhandarkar (Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism—p. 59) and is followed by Von Glasenapp (Madhva's Philosophie-p 11) and S. N. Dasgupta (Hist. Ind. Phil. Vol. IV p. 51). The second view was proposed by B. N. K. Sharma in his Hist. Dv. Sch. Vol. 1 pp 101-103. Those who are specially interested in this topic can go through the relevant passages in the books cited here. Mle. S. Siauue discusses the matter of Madhva's dates in her book, *La Doc de Madhva* p 2 seq. Other authors like C. R. Krishna Rao (Sri Madhva, His Life and Doctrine) also deal with this same problem in their works.

### Works

Thirty Seven works have come down to us under the name of Madhva. Among them, there are commentaries on the Brāhma Sūtras, the Principal Upaniṣads and the Bh. Gitā. He has produced glosses on the Ṛg. Veda, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the Mahābhārata. He has also written independent treatises on all the major epistemological and metaphysical themes. There are, moreover, practical, devotional, and ritual texts meant for the daily religious life of his followers. In fact his writings show, how he tried to take the whole cycle of seasonal and daily life into his theological and ritual concerns. Among all the great Ācāryas, Madhva alone wrote a gloss on the Ṛg. Veda Saṃhita to establish the truth of his position. Broadening the accepted canon of scriptures,

Madhva makes use of śruti, smṛti and the vaiṣṇava āgamas to prove the legitimacy and truth of his teachings.

### **Madhva's Style**

The brevity of Madhva's sentences and his almost aphoristic style make him a rather difficult Hindu philosophical writer. Some initiation, therefore, into his thought and the help of commentaries are needed to understand his works. His works are full of dialectical subtleties. The consequent use of technical terms hinders an easy reading of Madhva's texts.

The number of quotations in Madhva's works is another source of difficulty in understanding him. The citations from the Purāṇas and the Saṃhitas are just given with the statement, 'so in Padma' etc. Often the quotations are designated by a mere 'iti ca'. Most of his commentaries on the Upaniṣads are nothing but chains of citations from unknown works such as 'Brahmatarka'. Because of the lack of a Purāṇa and Pāñcarātra concordance, no one, except a traditional Pandit who knows the various works by heart, can trace the numberless citations of Madhva. Madhva's method of interpretation is yet another source of difficulty in the correct understanding of his works. He is a religious thinker who tries to use the various texts in order to prove the orthodoxy and validity of his faith.

Madhva's works are full of controversies. He has taken great pains in refuting the various schools of thought. His refutations of monistic acosmism and apophatism are well thought out and carefully worded. But a student of Madhva has the unavoidable feeling that if Madhva had taken more care in explaining the meaning of his own terms and in presenting the positive aspects of his own doctrines, he would have done a much greater service to posterity. For example, it is difficult to find in the writings of Madhva a systematic explanation of the ideas of the independence of God, of the reality of grace, of the meaning of the reality of the world,

of the meaning of human existence etc. The over-emphasis on the refutation of other schools on the one side and the insufficiency of clear and systematic explanations of some of his own tenets, on the other, leave a student of Madhva with many insoluble problems, for which he has to look for answers in the various commentators. But this was the style of Hindu scholastic thinkers in general. Finally, in his effort to prove that his tenets are the only truly orthodox, and traditional Hindu tenets, Madhva has taken into his system doctrines which are mutually exclusive. Strict monotheism on the one side and the non-theistic idea of the non-personal character of the Vedas and the doctrine of 'karma' on the other; the view that Viṣṇu alone is independent and the only agent in all creaturely activity on the one hand and the acceptance of 'jivas' agentship and their limited freedom and of the punishment of wicked souls on the other, bring tensions into the system of Madhva. But in Jayatīrtha, Madhva found a worthy disciple and commentator. He brings out clearly the inner possibilities of Dvaita-Vedānta.

Unless one keeps all these difficulties and obscurities of Madhva's works in mind, one cannot give an objective and critical presentation of the Dvaita system.

### **'Non-Existent Texts' and Madhva**

In the past, at least from the time of Appayadīkṣita, Madhva has been accused of citing non-existent authorities. Sometimes it has been said that he fabricated some of his authorities. But such an accusation does not seem just. As one of Madhva's later disciples pointed out: Have not Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja quoted from works unknown to us? Madhva as a rule gives the names of the works he quotes. In AV III. 4.252 he affirms that "Pravṛtta" forms part of Pañacarātra. In verse 265 he speaks of Bṛhat-tantra and in 274 of "Guruvṛtta". These texts, for example, are not known to us. During his life time Madhva had enough opponents. If these works which he mentions were fabricated



by him, they would certainly have not left him in peace. We know from Madhva-Vijaya that Madhva had a certain "historical and critical sense". We hear of Madhva searching for manuscripts during his many pilgrimages. Once his guru Acyutaprekṣa, in a discussion with some Brāhmins, asked his disciples to find a text of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa from the different manuscripts he had. To every one's surprise, the text given by Madhva proved to be the correct one. (M. V. IV. 49 seq). In Madhva's commentary on the same Purāṇa, he has brought together some of the important variant texts. (B. N. K. Sharma: Hist. Dv. Sch I. p. 171). He certainly also made some comparisons between the different versions of the text of the Mahābhārata. It is quite possible that during his journey through the North of India, he came across some works, which were not known in the South. Since we have no valid evidence to the contrary, we prefer to hold the view that Madhva made use of some works which were considered authoritative in certain circles. Such works were not perhaps known to the followers of other Hindu traditions.

### **Non-Indian Influence on Madhva**

In the past, some scholars have spoken of the possibility of non-Indian chiefly Christian and Islamic influence on Madhva's life and thought. Perhaps the first person to raise this problem was A. C. Burnell (*Indian Antiquary*. Vol. I. 1873), because of the presence of a Christian community close to Madhva's native place. In 1910 C. N. Krishnaswamy Aiyar in his book: *Shri Madhva and Madhwism* (Shri Madhwacahrya, a Sketch of his Life....2nd edition of the book) took up the theory and tried to establish it. (Cf. also S. N. Dasgupta. *Hist. Dv. Sch. of Vedānta and Its Literature*, 1960, p. 103; *Grierson Encyl. of Religion and Ethics* VIII pp. 233-235). The portrayal of Madhva's infancy is modelled on the infancy narratives of the Gospels. In the doctrinal field too Madhva was apparently influenced by certain Christian tenets. Madhva's teachings on the mediation of Vāyu in the liberation of souls, his acceptance of

eternal hell and the doctrine of 'mukti-ayogya' souls are paralleled on Christian teachings. But in the course of our exposition, we have shown that all the above mentioned doctrines could be quite well explained from traditional Hindu teachings. There is no need to postulate any Christian influence on Madhva. In Dvaita-Vedānta, the traditional teachings have been given the special stamp of Madhva's insights.

The suspicion that Madhva might have borrowed from Islam his teaching on the utter transcendence of the Supreme Being is equally unfounded. Madhva Vijaya says that the Ācārya met a Muslim king during his wanderings and talked with him. But from such a cursory meeting, we cannot conclude to any lasting influence on his thought. Both Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism teach clearly the transcendence of the Lord. From the documents available to us, and from the writings of Madhva himself we cannot reach the conclusion that Madhva was influenced by Christian or Islamic teachings. All the major doctrines of Madhva are well rooted in the Hindu tradition prior to him. For a well balanced exposition of his point one can refer to the appendix in the book "Les Hierarchies Spirituelles", of Mle S. Siauue. Though Christians were not unknown in the Kannada country during the time of Madhva, still we know how the different communities, (especially the orthodox brāhmin community) kept themselves aloof from one another. Hence to speak of inter-religious contact and of mutual doctrinal influence seems to be a little unrealistic.

### **Past Neglect of Non-Advaita Thought**

In the past, there was a tendency of identify vedāntic thought with Advaita-Vedānta. From the time, P. Deussen and Max Mueller thought of Śaṅkara's Advaita as the great philosophical and theological achievement of India, Indian scholars too, who wanted a hearing in the West lionized that system. Vivekananda and his followers presented Dvaita

and Viśiṣṭādvaita as stages in a person's religious growth to his ultimate goal, viz, non-dual realisation.

Today this one sided situation is changing. The pioneering works of Dr. Nagaraja Sharma and Dr. B. N. K. Sharma, both convinced Dvaitins have contributed much to bring about a more balanced appraisal of Madhva's thought. In fact, today, many Indologists speak of the complementary character of the various schools of Vedānta. The followers of Viśiṣṭādvaita and of the other non-Sāṅkara vedānta schools are going back to the sources and are trying to bring to the fore the contributions of their respective schools to the common Hindu heritage,

In Germany, Madhva's thought came to be known and appreciated through Prof. Von Glassenapp's book. One of the most perceptive and sympathetic students of Madhva was certainly the late Dr. Mle. S. Siauve. In three fascicles, she published with notes, and comments some of the important texts of Madhva's great work, the Anuvyākhyāna. Her thesis published under the title 'La Doctrine de Madhva' is a very objective and authoritative study of the major teachings of Madhva.

There are also many other works on Madhva and on Dvaita-Vedānta. Most of these works have helped me to get a better understanding of Madhva and I would like to acknowledge here my indebtedness to all of them, especially to the valuable works of Dr. B. N. K. Sharma and Mle. Siauve. Surely, on some points, my interpretations may not be the same as theirs. This is but natural, since each student looks at reality from his particular angle. Different points of view will certainly enable us to appreciate better the richness of Madhva's thought.

#### **About this Book**

This work is definitely a philosophical and systematic study of Madhva's thought. Certainly, we have studied the

historical background and growth of Madhva's thought. But our effort has been chiefly directed to the presentation of Madhva's ontological theology as objectively and clearly as possible. Problems like whether Madhva got his basic dvaita insights from Śruti texts or from Vaiṣṇava literature, or how far Madhva is conceptually and doctrinally dependent on the already existing schools of thought are not dealt with explicitly. The different positions one can take on these problems, can be defended with a certain amount of verisimilitude, though no conclusive arguments can be adduced for any position. At present the historical data we possess do not permit us to make any apodictic statement on many questions regarding ancient and medieval Indian thought. Madhva, inheriting as he did the vast philosophical and religious traditions of Hinduism, was certainly influenced by them. He made use of concepts available to him to express his ideas. In that every process he changed the inner content of some of the concepts. In the course of our exposition we have pointed out the similarities that exist between Dvaita Vedānta and the other Hindu schools of religious thought, without in any way making a judgement on them.

The central theme of this book is the mādharma conception of the Supreme Being. In the first chapter we expose the epistemological and metaphysical principles on which Madhva bases his conception of God. The next point that is taken up for study is the knowability of God and the actual way we come to know him. If God (Viṣṇu) is knowable and is actually known through śruti and through other means of knowledge based on śruti, then what is He in himself? So we have devoted a chapter to the study of Viṣṇu's attributes and 'avatāras'. According to the vaiṣṇava and vedāntic tradition, the Supreme Being is related to the world and to the jivas (man). So the last two chapters expose the mādharma teaching on Viṣṇu and the world and Viṣṇu and the jivas (man).

Madhva's thought is centred on Viṣṇu. He looks at the universe from the angle of Viṣṇu, in as much as all beings are



related to the Supreme Lord. This is the reason why in this book, we have studied the system of Madhva from this central teaching of the great Ācārya.

In the appendices we have dealt with some important points of Dvaita-Vedānta. Such points like 'predestination', 'sin' etc have been studied with care. Since these points could not be easily incorporated into the main body of the book, they have been included as appendices. We feel that some of these points and a comparative approach to them, may be of help for a better understanding of Madhva's thought.

We do confess, that we have introduced certain themes and problems into this book which are not dealt with in the other works on Madhva. Instead of directly exposing the mādhva teaching on the jīvas, we have attempted to discuss the Ācārya's conception of man, the composite being. Man and freedom, man and society, the problem of evil and so on have been studied with some care, because at present these are the points that concern us. Today the religious thought of our country needs to be studied in the background of the sociological, political, economic and religious problems facing us. The widespread injustice prevalent in the land, the inter-religious and communal rivalries and troubles together with the increasing loss of the sense of national identity and of moral and religious values force us to look at our own religious heritage from new angles. Can the traditional philosophical and religious thought of the country offer us a firm basis to tackle our problems? Can it be the undergirding philosophy of integral human progress? Even if our great Ācāryas were not immediately concerned with our problems, still, do they not offer us valuable hints and suggestions to come to grips with present reality? In Madhva, for example we have a world affirming, yet 'God' centred world view. He is concerned with both the individual and society. Yet we know that the problems and



situations Madhva had to deal with were not quite the same as ours. How to make the insights of Madhva fruitful for our times? As religious persons, centred in the Supreme, how and why should we involve ourselves in the struggles of all men and women to achieve their genuine human destiny? Any religious thought and action which compartmentalises humanity is suspect in the eyes of men and women. Therefore, even the most objective study of the past must have relevance for the present and the future. At present the quest of humanity is to free itself from its manifold alienations and bondages. The genuineness of our experience of God is measured by its liberating and transforming power. These are some of the reasons, why in the course of our exposition of Madhva's doctrines, certain present day concerns have been very tentatively raised. Our hope is that the various trends of religious and philosophical thought now alive and active in our country will enter into a friendly dialogue and involve themselves actively to find a basis for cooperation and integral human development.

Many persons have helped me to complete this modest work on Madhva. Originally, it was submitted as a doctoral dissertation to the Faculty of Philosophy, University of the Münster, W. Germany. The original manuscript has been thoroughly revised for publication.

The late Prof. Dr. Paul Hacker, internationally known Indologist was my 'Doktor-Vater'. His guidance and help were always available to me. His books, his classes and above all his historical, philological and critical approach to texts were of immense help to me. It is a great pleasure for me to acknowledge my indebtedness to him and to pay my respectful homage to his memory.

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## CHAPTER I

### EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METAPHYSICAL BASIS OF MADHVA'S THOUGHT

In any system of thought the problem of knowledge is of prime importance. A discussion on the nature, scope and varieties, of knowledge, on the pre-suppositions involved and on the general reliability of human knowing, in fact from the basis of a philosophical system. Epistemology, therefore, forms the first stage in man's journey to 'Truth'.

This is the reason why most of the classical Indian systems begin their inquiry into the nature of reality with a discussion on knowledge, its varieties and sources. Madhva is no exception to this rule. In fact, in almost all his works, long discussions on the problem of knowledge are to be found. The whole of his short treatise '*Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*' is devoted to epistemology.

In this first chapter we intend to explain very briefly, the epistemological tenets of Madhva, in so far as, they are needed to understand his views on God, man and the world. Since our aim is thus limited, we are forced to leave out the long controversies on the problem of knowledge. They are, surely important for the history of Indian epistemology; they do not, however, throw more light on the mādhva system itself.

The chapter has yet another aim. Our study of Madhva is directed to the discovery of his 'thought-form'. By 'thought-form' we mean the understanding of being and of oneself, that forms the horizon, encompassing and founding the ideas of a thinker, The basic epistemological and metaphysical tents of Madhva on which the whole of '*Dvaita-Vedānta*' is built must, therefore, be studied in order to discover his 'thought-form'.

Since the central theme of this book is Madhva's teaching on the Supreme Being, it is essential for us to know, on what philosophical and theological basis, he constructs his specific views on the Absolute. Hence, before we begin the detailed discussion on the mādharma doctrine on Viṣṇu, the Supreme Reality, we should have a clear idea of the philosophical and theological horizon within which alone his various doctrines and concepts find their real and full meaning.

Madhva opens his short treatise on knowledge '*Pramāṇa-lakṣaṇa*' with the statement : '*pramāṇa*' is valid knowledge.<sup>1</sup> It is the revelation of an object as it is. The mādharma definition : '*Yathārtham pramāṇam*' may be briefly explained thus : '*Yathā*' in Dvaita-Vedānta stands for the fact of not surpassing or overstepping the object (*Padārtha-anītikrama*). *Artha* is *jñāna-artha*; the object of knowledge (*jñeya*) as opposed to '*kriya-artha*' the object of action. True knowledge, therefore, is the cognition of an object as it is, i. e., a cognition which does not overstep the object known.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, *pramāṇa* has a primary and a secondary meaning.<sup>3</sup> In the primary sense, *pramāṇa* signifies, as mentioned above, "true and objective knowledge" and in the secondary sense, it stands for the "means of true knowledge."<sup>4</sup> In Dvaita the term '*anupramāṇā*' stands for what other schools simply call '*pramāṇa*' i. e., the various means or sources of knowledge.

Madhva admits three distinct means of knowledge (*anupramāṇa*). Other schools of thought admit either less or

1. Prl. *Yathārtham pramāṇam*.
2. *Yāthārthyam eva mānatvaṁ tan mukhyaṁ jñāna śabdayoh* (A V II. 1.22). This is a quasi-citation from B. T. Cf. also V. T. V. 81 where *mānatvaṁ* means *prāmāṇyam* *Yāthārthyam* is indeed the fact of 'validity' (truth) Cf. also the comments of Jayatīrtha on A. V. II. 1.22 in N. S.
3. Prl. *tad dvividhaṁ, kevalam anupramāṇam ca*.
4. *ibid. Yathārthajñānam kevalam tat sādhanam anupramāṇam*.

more than three.<sup>5</sup> The Advaitins, for example, following the Kumārila school of *Mīmāṃsā* speak of six distinct ways of knowledge. Madhva recognizes only perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and verbal testimony (*vākya*).

Perception as a process of knowledge is defined by Madhva as the "contact between the defectless object and the defectless sense."<sup>6</sup> The knowledge which results from this sense-object contact is called perceptual knowledge (*pratyakṣajñānaṃ*).<sup>7</sup> Madhva speaks of seven senses (*indriyāṇi*) of knowledge. They are the usual five senses plus mind (*manas*) and the internal witness (*sākṣin*).<sup>8</sup> A. V. 1.28 describes *pratyakṣa* "as that knowledge said to be produced by a faculty without defect; this faculty is of two types : that which pertains to the domain of matter (*prakṛta-indriya*) and that of the spirit

5. *ibid.* *anupramāṇaṃ trividhaṃ, pratyakṣam anumānaṃ, āgama* The Materialists admit only one source of knowledge : sense perception. The Vaiśeṣikas recognise two : sense perception and inference. The Sāṃkhya-Yoga schools accept three, the above two plus verbal testimony. The Naiyāyikas recognise four, the above three plus comparison (*upamāna*). The Prābhākara school of *Mīmāṃsā* accepts five. They add to the above four a fifth *pramāṇa* called 'arthāpatti' (presumption). The Advaitins and the Bhāṭṭas recognise six sources of knowledge; the sixth being the 'the perception of non-existence' (*anupalabdhi*) Madhva reduces 'upamāna' 'arthāpatti' and 'anupalabdhi' to *anumāna*.
6. *Ibid.* *nirdoṣārthendriyasannikarṣaṃ pratyakṣam* 'pratyakṣa-jñānaṃ is immediate. But the immediacy of knowledge admits of degrees. The most immediate of all knowledge is 'sākṣin's' knowledge of the self.
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.* *pratyakṣaṃ saptavidhaṃ sākṣiśādinriyabhedena* For further details see : Jayatīrtha's *pramāṇalakṣaṇa Tī* By 'indriyas', Madhva understands the faculties of knowledge. These are of two types : a) the very essence of the knowing subject or the spiritual subject as knower, b) the material organs of knowledge (A. V. II. 1.28)



(śuddha-caitanyaṃ) (Sākṣin). The flaws or defects which can affect the five senses are various sicknesses and organic defects. The object is said to be defective, if it is too small or too far away from the senses.

The "mind" or *manas* in *Dvaita* is a sense. Besides its function of unifying the knowledge of the other five senses, Madhva ascribes to it other functions too. The mind can err (unlike the *sākṣin*) if it is afflicted by such defects as attachment and passion. The '*manas*' is the intermediary between the knowing subject and the external world (which is in contact with the senses). It is a substance (*dravya*) made of subtle matter. It is the seat of memory.<sup>9</sup> Madhva defends the validity of memory because it forms an integral part of his realism. The past, just because of its pastness, does not lose its validity. Truth is not bound by any time limit. The continuity of the knowing subject as experienced in retrospective and unifying consciousness (*anusandhāna*) and the reality of the world that is in constant change would be endangered if the validity of memory is rejected.

B. T. N. II. 5.19 affirms that the activity of '*manas*' and of the other *indriyas* is rooted in the activity of *Sattva-guṇa*. '*Manas*' is also called '*antaḥkaraṇa*' the internal instrument. It is the instrument through which the *sākṣin*, the spirit, directs the energies of knowledge and activity. It enables the knowing subject to synthesise the various data coming from outside, to attend to the objects as permanent realities. But in the thought of Madhva, the ultimate knowing agent is the 'spirit', the *sākṣin*. It makes all knowledge 'immediate'.

The seventh sense, viz., the internal witness (*sākṣin*), is the very essential nature of the knower considered as a source of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> The '*sākṣin*' is the very knower as knower. One is tempted to say that the '*sākṣin*' is nothing but the

9. *ibid* mānasapratyakṣajā smṛtiḥ

10. *ibid*. tatra pramātraśvarūpendriyaṃ sākṣityucyate

consciousness of the knower as a source of knowledge. The *sākṣin* has its own specific objects like the other senses, viz., the nature of the self and all its attributes, the mind and all its manifestations, time, unmanifest ether and positive and existent ignorance.<sup>11</sup> These objects are intuited by the *sākṣin*. The "I-consciousness" is the most characteristic mark of the *sākṣi*-perception. The "internal witness" is the ultimate principle unifying all our various cognitions, in as much all the modifications of the mind are unified and appropriated by the '*sākṣin*' to the knowing self. The '*sākṣin*' is absolutely defectless and therefore, possesses absolute validity.<sup>12</sup> As we shall see below, the *sākṣin* is the final source and judge of all valid knowledge. It is the luminous principle which illumines the '*manas*' and the other senses. It is of the nature of spirit-consciousness, (*caitanyarūpa*), though actual knowledge always calls for the presence of an object.<sup>13</sup> Actual perception of external objects is produced when the conscious *ātman* is in contact with the '*manas*', the '*manas*' with the senses and the sense with the object.<sup>14</sup>

Perceptual knowledge is thus immediate knowledge (*sākṣātkāra*). Again, the immediacy of knowledge finds its highest expression in the intuition of the *sākṣin*. In us, the

11. *ibid.*

12. A. V. III. 4,154 *mānase darśane doṣāḥ syur na vai sākṣidarśane doṣāś ca mānasa eva darśane bhavanti atas tat samśayātmakam jāyate....na tu sākṣidarśane doṣasaombhavaḥ* NS quoted by B. N. K. Sharma. The Phil. of Śrī Madhvācārya p. 109. Cf. also *Pramāṇa-lakṣaṇa*

The acceptance of '*sākṣin*' as a sense is something peculiar to Madhva.

On the history and meaning of the word, '*sākṣin*', vide. Cammann. K : *Das System des Advaita nach der Lehre Prakāśatmans*, pp. 111-113. Also T. M. P. Mahadevan. The phil. of Advaita, p, 185 ff.

13. *Prl Tī*

14. *ibid.* *ātmā manasā, mana indriyeṇa samyujyate indriyāṇām vastu prāpya prakāśakāryatvaniyamāt.*

sākṣin, the manas and the senses are distinct, but in the Supreme Being, his very essence is his senses.<sup>15</sup> So he possesses the highest type of intuitive knowledge.

### Inference (anumana)

Madhva calls the faultless middle term or 'reason' (hetu) inference (anumāna).<sup>16</sup> Inferential knowledge is the knowledge of the *probandum* (sādhya) derived from the knowledge of the middle term (līṅga or hetu or upapatti). This shows that inferential knowledge is an indirect knowledge. The *probandum* e. g., fire, is not directly perceived; it is concluded from the knowledge of the middle term which is immediately known. Such a passag from the middle term to the *Probandum* is possible because of the invariable concomitance existing between them. The most importance elements in inference is this invariable concomitance of the middle term and the *probandum*.<sup>17</sup>

Madhva's classification of inference and the enumeration of the various inferential defects<sup>18</sup> are not of any interest to us. However, it must be pointed out here that inference is valid only in the sphere of perceivable objects, because the true and certain knowledge of invariable concomitance is ultimately founded on perception. Perception as we know is possible only within the domain of the perceptible. Yet

15. VTV, p. 115 akṣāṇi ca svarūpāṇi nityajñānātmakā-  
nica vide VTV Tī. p. 115.

16. Prl. nirdoṣopapattir anumā

17. ibid. vyāptir upapattimūlaṃ

18. Madhva explains his views on inference both in  
pramāṇalakṣaṇa, and in VTV. no. 81

The Vaiśeṣikas reduce verbal testimony to inference  
(Vākyam vākyārtho' numānaṃ) The Prābhākaraś  
accept only vedic testimony as an independent  
*pramāṇa*. Human testimony is reduced to inference.  
Madhva rejects the reduction of testimony (śabda) to  
inference, because the essential element of inference,  
viz, invariable concomitance is wanting in testimony.

Madhva accepted the validity of inference based on 'Śruti' (cf. note. 26). In this case the value of inference depends on the truth of śruti. These aspects of Madhva's view on inference will have to be dealt with in greater detail when we take up the problem of the knowability of God.

### Verbal Testimony (vākya, āgama)

The spoken word, free from all defects, is verbal testimony.<sup>19</sup> The term "word" (śabda) does not signify isolated and unconnected words, but sentences (śabda vākyaātmā). A sentence is capable of conveying knowledge, if it possesses the basic requisites of expectancy (akāṃkṣā), syntactical and logical relation of words (yogyatā), and contiguity of words (sannidhi). The words used must be intelligible, They should not contain any inner contradiction or narrate impossible things, and they should communicate something meaningful and useful.<sup>20</sup>

From the side of the speaker, too, some qualities are called for : right knowledge of what he communicates and the desire to communicate the truth he knows.<sup>21</sup> If the speaker does not possess these requisites, his words cannot communicate any knowledge. Like inference, verbal testimony is an indirect source of knowledge i. e., through the medium of the knowledge of the words.

There are two types of verbal testimony : the eternal (nitya) i. e., the non-personal, vedic (apauruṣeya) testimony and the non-eternal-smṛti testimony.<sup>22</sup> The personal testimony is also our ordinary human testimony, where the communication and the understanding of truth depend on the fulfilment of the conditions mentioned above. The non-

19. prl. nirdoṣaśabda āgamaḥ

20. Prl. Ṭī

21. In VTV Ṭī Jayatīrtha enumerates some of the requisites. Cf. also Prl. Ṭī

22. VTV. p. 113 āgamo dvividho jñeyo nityo 'nityas tathaiva ca,



personal testimony is contained in the sacred texts and it is valid in and by itself.

The sacred texts alone give us access to God and to the knowledge of the supr-sensible realities. Since a fuller discussion of the nature and number of the sacred books is necessary in connection with the discussion on our knowledge of God, we can leave this point out for the time being.

### **The Relative Strength of these three Means of Knowledge.**

Each of these sources of knowledge possesses validity in its own sphere. Therefore, there cannot be any real contradiction between them. This is the general, though unexpressed principle of Madhva.

Still, there is room for doubt in this matter.<sup>23</sup> For example, there are texts in the Upaniṣads which "apparently" speak of the God-Soul identity. Now, Madhva himself admits that the sacred tradion is a stronger source of knowledge than perception and inference. If this is unconditionally true, then God-Soul identity or monism must be the truth, which doubtless, is opposed to the teaching of Madhva. "Even though scripture is a stronger source of knowledge than perception and inference, still it cannot have validity, if it conflicts with the source of knowledge on which it depends."<sup>24</sup>

23. On the whole problem of the relative validity of the sources of knowledge. vide. VTV. p.116 ff. Jayatirtha's commentary is very informative.

24. VTV. no. 12 pratyakṣāder āgamasya prābalye 'pi..... Cf. also VTV. no. 81 "Of these three (perception, inference, and sacred tradition) the last is generally superior to the others. But it is not valid when it stultifies that way of knowing on which it depends. 'Pratayakṣa' is most often the primary source of certitude; yet in certain cases 'anumāna' may also be a source. In the case, where 'sacred texts' (śruti) form the sole authority, it alone is the unique source of certitude (AV II. 1. 19). Each 'pramāṇa' therefore,



This text as it stands is not very clear. But judging from the general context of Madhva's teaching, the text seems to mean the following. There are some texts which "apparently" speak of the identity of the soul with Brahman. But since, they contradict our incontrovertible experience of difference, we must say that the sacred texts do not mean to teach identity. So when the sacred texts touch upon matters of experience, they must be interpreted in accordance with experience. The proper subject matter of the sacred texts is Viṣṇu, the other super-sensible realities, liberation and the means to attain it. Here, the sacred texts have full validity.

Sometimes, Madhva writes that 'immediate perception' (*pratyakṣa*) and the 'sacred tradition' are the sources of knowledge sustaining all other knowledge (*upajīvyā-pramāṇa*). Often the opponents' views are refuted with the terse comment: 'because it is opposed to immediate perception' (*pratyakṣa* or *anubhava* *virodhāt*) or "because it is opposed to the 'Sacred tradition' (Veda or *Śruti*-*virodhāt*) Madhva combines also *pratyakṣa* or *anubhava* and *Śruti* together. Still he has no hesitation in writing: "Sacred tradition possesses an intrinsic validity just like immediate experience"<sup>25</sup> Hence *pratyakṣa* and *Śabda* enjoy a certain primacy in relation to inference.

Madhva repeatedly declares that no amount of syllogistic arguments can invalidate experience.<sup>26</sup> Once we admit that

has validity in its own sphere. "All things being equal, the common opinion or common consensus (*lokānukūla*) is stronger" (*Gīt Bh IX. 12*). Here we can see clearly Madhva's reliance on common sense. A philosopher must take as his starting point what is commonly accepted and what is experienced as true.

25. A. V. I. 1.66.

26. VTV. no. 140 *ato na tarkamātratā eva dṛṣṭasya bhrāntitvaṃkalpyam* *ibid* no. 81 "knowledge is of two kinds : external knowledge and experience (*anubhava*) Between the two, 'anubhava' is stronger. A. V. III. 3.139 : '*pratyakṣaśabdānusārād anumā prakīrtitā*

inference can invalidate experience, then inference itself, which is ultimately based on experience, loses all claim to validity. From these few passing remarks of Madhva, it seems to us that he ascribes to experience, especially the intuitive perception of the "inner witness" (sākṣin), a relative supremacy in the sphere of the knowledge of realities. This means that experience (anubhava or anubhūti) is all important in this world and its testimony should be the basis of all reflection and argumentation. Experience is taken by Madhva to mean any immediate knowledge, as opposed to reasoning. He in fact builds his epistemology on experience as it is grasped in the very act of experiencing by the spiritual subject.

### The Dvaita Concept of Truth and Reality

With the help of the preceding remarks, we can follow better the mādḥva concept of truth and reality. Since Madhva, the greatest opponent of the monists, formed his concepts in sharp contrast to the views of the Advaitins, it is necessary to summarise here the advaitic idea of truth and reality.

### The Advaita Concept of Truth and Reality<sup>27</sup>

In the Sāṅkara school of non-dualism, the essence of truth consists in "non-contradictedness" (avyabhicāritva or

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"Inference is known as *anumā*, because it follows *pratyakṣa* and *śabda*", says Madhva. In another place he writes : "Inference is rooted in *Pratyakṣa* and *śabda*" (A. V. III. 2.19). They are the sustaining (*upajīvyā*) *pramāṇa* and inference is the sustained (*upajīvaka*) *pramāṇa* because all its data come from the former. Madhva is fully convinced of the powerlessness of independent reasoning (*anumā*). Such an inference is compared to a courtesan (*anumākāmacāriṇī*) who without any shame before sacred testimony and *pratyakṣa* follows her own desires (A. V. I. 1.214-215).

27. I am indebted to the unpublished dissertation of R. De Smet : "The Theological Method of Śaṅkara" (Gregorianum, Rome, 1953) for the ideas contained

abādhitatva).<sup>28</sup> For the Advaitin as for the Dvaitin cognition is dependent on reality (vastutantra). Knowledge does not create the object. All our knowledge, except one, is dualistic, i. e., implying the subject-object distinction. But the supreme experience as taught in the sacred texts, which alone is true knowledge is non-dualistic, contradicting and annulling all subject-object distinction. The final intuition of truth (brahmasākṣātkāra) is the identity of the knower, knowledge and object. In the light of this supreme knowledge, all other cognitions are false. The only cognition which remains uncontradicted is the final intuition of the Supreme.

The characteristic marks of ultimate, true knowledge are, non-deviation and the identity of the subject, object and knowledge. Since non-deviation implies unchangeability and identity of subject and object, it follows that true reality is eternal, changeless, and non-dual or monistic.

The problem which the Advaitin has to face now, is how to explain our ordinary knowledge of the changing realities of the world. Applying the criterion of truth and reality mentioned above to our ordinary experience, he reaches the following conclusion. At one end of the scale, we have 'the supreme intuition of identity'. It is nothing but the perfect identity of being, knowledge and bliss. At the other end, there 'is pure and simple contradiction' (bādhitatvam), e.g.,

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in this section. The exposition of the advaitic concept of truth and reality offered here is not sufficiently nuanced, because a real discussion of the subtle differences between the various pre-mādhva monists is not possible in our context. The idea proposed here give us a general view of the monist position, which Madhva refutes in his works. In fact the Advaita, Madhva refutes is not so much the highly nuanced thought of Śaṅkara as the less subtle interpretations of it by his disciples.

28. P. Hacker 'suggests' that *avyabhicāritva* could be rendered into English with the word 'non-deviation', and *abādhitatva* with 'non-exclusion'.

the knowledge of sky flower (epistemological contradiction) and utter unreality, such as sky flower or hare's horn (ontological contradiction). Pure ignorance is the cause, if one thinks that such objects exist. Between these two extremes, there are cognitions and realities which call for explanation.

Erroneous knowledge for example (the mistaking of a rope for a snake) and dreams (the dream of a chariot) though real and capable of producing various effects in us, as long as the error and dream last, are contradicted and stultified by higher knowledge, viz., the true knowledge and the waking experience. These cognitions are not true, because they are contradicted. Still, the "rope-snake" and the "dream-chariot" could not have been utterly unreal, for they presented themselves to our consciousness. What is utterly unreal, e. g., sky flower, cannot at any time be the object of our experience. So, the Advaitin says that the rope-snake and the dream-chariot have a fleeting, phenomenal reality, though from the standpoint of true knowledge they are nothing but the figments of nescience, depending on the mind.

Using this example as the basis of his further reflection, the Advaitin tries to explain the nature of our cognitions in the waking state and of the realities we come into contact with. Our waking knowledge is dualistic in character. The objects of which we have experience are changing and non-eternal. As the true knowledge of the rope contradicts and annuls the false knowledge of the snake, so our dualistic knowledge will be contradicted and annulled when the supreme intuition of identity dawns upon us. From the absolute standpoint, our experience of the world is false. Still, our waking experience is stronger and more consistent than an erroneous knowledge. The world consequently, is neither utter unreality like the sky-flower, nor fictitious, imaginary reality like a "rope-snake". It has a practical reality (*vyāvahārikasattā*). This reality is indefinable (*anirvacanīya*). It is neither "being" (*sat*) because *sat* is eternal, changeless, uncontradicted, absolute self-identity;



nor is it utter unreality (*asat*) because unlike *asat* it is the object of our experience and action. So, it is different from being and non-being. (*sadasadvilakṣaṇa* or to use Śaṅkara's terminology *tattvānyattvābhyāmvilakṣaṇa*.)

To consider our waking experience and the changing multiplicity of our experience as real in and by themselves is the result of nescience. As the snake (in the erroneous knowledge of the rope-snake) was superimposed on the rope, because of ignorance, so the world of multiplicity is superimposed on the only non-dual reality, Brahman. The reality of the rope-snake is the rope; so also ultimately the reality of the world we see is the reality of Brahman, on whom it is superimposed. In order to make this point more precise and to connect it with the previous paragraph we must analyse further the *advaita* position. For the *Advaitins*, except perhaps in the *acosmic* interpretations of *Prakāśānanda*, the world which is called "name and form" (*nāmarūpa*) or the result of nescience is not complete unreality. In comparison with Brahman, it is "nothing". But in comparison with the total unreality of the sky-flower, it is something. Hence as remarked above it is, *sadasadvilakṣaṇa*'. At the same time it is clear to the *Advaitins* that the whole universe is standing on and sustained by Brahman. Outside of Brahman the world has no reality of its own. This is the reason why the *Advaitin* says that only when one realizes Brahman, the world is seen to be as unreal. This, in short, is the *advaitic* concept of truth and reality.

### The Dvaita Concept of Truth and Reality

It is this view of truth and reality which Madhva refutes. As remarked above, the essence of true knowledge according to Madhva lies not in non-contradiction but in objectivity. The apprehension of an object as it is, is the essential note of true knowledge.<sup>29</sup> Jayatīrtha commenting on this definition of truth in the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa* writes that "true know-

29. *Tattvodyota*.



ledge makes the object as it is, its object."<sup>30</sup> Secondly, knowledge has an essential relationship to space and time (*deśakālasambandhitva*). Jayatīrtha calls time "the substrate of all knowledge." Everything is experienced only as qualified by such or such time, for there is no neutral cognition of objects without the cognition of "is", "was", or "will be."<sup>31</sup> This means, that a true cognition must apprehend the object as it exists here and now. At a later time, the object may disappear or change. But this fact does not make my present knowledge invalid. There is no doubt that this remark is directed against the Advaitin's view of truth. As Madhva himself says : "To put a limit to truth from the point of view of time is a contradiction. What would cease to be true at a later time, how can that be true now ?"<sup>32</sup> Truth cannot, therefore, be qualified as provisory as the Advaitins do regarding "vyāvahārika Satya", nor can non-contradiction at all times be essential to make cognition true.

Such a concept of truth necessarily flows from Madhva's definition of "reality". In *Tattvodyota*, Madhva writes that reality is that which is the object of knowledge."<sup>33</sup> His view is that reality is that which is the object of any of the means of knowledge. In order to avoid the possibility of the inclusion of "erroneous objects" like a "rope-snake" in this definition, later commenattors have added a limiting element to it, viz., the object of knowledge must be non-superimposed (*anāropita*)."<sup>34</sup> Reality is not of its very nature unchangeable or eter-

30. Prl. *Ṭi yathāvasthitam jñeyam viṣayīkaroti*

31. *Vādāvali* p. 130 *tena ca kālena sarvaṃ viśiṣṭam evānubhūyate iti sarvādhāratayāstheyam astyāsīd bhaviṣyatīti vā pratitīm apāhāya padārthapratiter audāśinyenānanubhavāt.*

32. A. V. III. 2.60

33. *Tattvodyota*

34. For the relevant texts on this point : vide K. Narain : *A Critique of Mādhva Refutation of the Śāṅkara School of Vedānta* : p. 14 ff

nal. It is conditioned by time and space. The pot which exists today and disappears tomorrow is not an unreal object.

### The Characteristics of Knowledge and Reality

Dualism, i. e., the subject-object distinction, is one of the essential marks of knowledge. "We know of no knowledge, writes Madhva, independent of an object to be known—be it the subject knowing itself or some other principle—and of the knower."<sup>36</sup> Even in the knowledge of the self (I-consciousness) the knower objectifies himself: one's nature (svarūpa) is the object of knowledge. Madhva continues: "Where there is no knower and no object of knowledge, knowledge is just 'emptiness' (śūnya)."<sup>36</sup> Both Madhva and Jayatirtha base this assertion on our experience. "If our knowledge were identical with ourselves, our consciousness should have been 'I am knowledge.'"<sup>37</sup> But as a matter of fact, our experience is: 'I have knowledge.' In other words, knowledge

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35. VTV no. 432 na ca svarūpam anyad vā jñeyam  
jñātāraṃ ca vinā jñānaṃ

If the *subject* were to know itself as an object (i. e. if the subject in knowing itself were to objectify itself) then would it not be an illusion? a falsification of the real nature of the subject? A division in the very subject? Madhva's answer to this objection is founded on his notion of '*viśeṣa*'. The spiritual subject has the specific power in it, to turn on itself, to distance itself from itself without in any way impairing its inner unity. So the self's knowledge of itself is not like the knowledge of an object by means of a mental '*vṛtti*'. There seems to be no full objectification, in the subject's knowledge of itself. Again, arguments like the eye cannot see itself or the axe cannot cut itself, cannot be legitimately applied to the knowing subject. The subject is spiritual, endowed with self-luminosity. So it can know itself.

36. VTV no. 433 ato jñātṛ-jñeyābhāvāj jñānasyāpi  
śūnyatvaṃ

37. This is the teaching of Vyāsathirtha in his Nyāyāmṛta

is "having", it is an attribute of the "I" and not identity of being.<sup>38</sup>

The second characteristic mark of knowledge is that it is determinate. This means, that each cognition apprehends, more or less clearly, a distinct, qualified object. There is no such things as an indeterminate knowledge. First of all, according to Madhva, "only what is" and "what is not" are experienced."<sup>39</sup> So, something which is neither real nor unreal but different from both is never the object of our knowledge.<sup>40</sup> The Dvaitins moreover, reject the Nyāya view that our first perception is the perception of being in general without any determining qualities. For Madhva, every knowledge is distinct, i. e., it apprehends an object in its particularity. He writes : "In the initial apprehension of an entity, its uniqueness is grasped in a general way. as when each lamp in a row of a thousand lamps is apprehended in a general manner at the very first glance."<sup>41</sup>

A further characteristic of knowledge is that it is "self-valid."<sup>42</sup> In this, Madhva is in accord with the general

38. In Mādhvism the soul is not of the nature of being, knowledge and bliss. But the special mādharma idea of Viśeṣa enables us to say; 'the soul is knowledge'; and the soul has knowledge. But actual knowledge is always a relation to an object. 'Viśayavarjitaḥ prakāśa eva nāsti'. (Tattodyota)

39. VTV. no. 158 sadasador eva dvayor eva sarvair anubhūyamānatvāt.

40. *ibid.* no. 156; 157.

41. *ibid.* no. 129 sāmānyataḥ sarvavailakṣaṇye jñāta eva ghaṭatvādirjñānaṃ

*ibid.* no. 131 na ca yugapaj jñānānutpattir doṣaḥ yathā yugapadeva dipasahasradarśane sāmānyataḥ sarve jñāyanta eva tathā syāt. For further details VTV Tī pp. 142-143.

42. For texts on this point vide VTV nos. 21-26; VTV-Tī p. 39 ff; Vādāvali p. 124.

Truth is self valid: it is always known in itself by the sākṣin. If truth does not carry in itself its own

Vedāntic and Mīmāṃsā tradition. Knowledge is self-luminous (svaprakāśa) and so it does not call for another knowledge to establish its validity. Thus the general theory of "*Svataḥprāmāṇya-vāda*" rejects the *Nyāya* theory of *parataḥprāmāṇya-vāda* (validity ab alio) that establishes the validity of knowledge through extrinsic reasons. Such a theory condemns all thought to infinite regress. No pragmatic criterion is sufficient to establish and legitimize the absolute nature of truth. Truth carries within itself the proofs of its validity.

Madhva uses the *svataḥprāmāṇya-vāda* to refute at the same time the advaitic distinction between absolute (*pāramārthika*) and relative (*vyāvahārika*) truths. The advaitic assertion that our day today 'true knowledge' of the world would be stultified at a later stage, when the real intuition of our identity with the Absolute dawns on us, is unacceptable. If our present knowledge is bound to be nullified in the future, why may not the "identity-intuition" be subject to the same law? According to the Advaitins all our *pramāṇas*, *śruti*, *yukti* and so on operate on the relative plane (A.V. 1.4.103). Then what justifiable ground have we to affirm an absolute, uncontradictable level of reality to which alone 'self-validity' is applicable? Why should the dialectics of negation stop at a particular level? What *pramāṇa* have we to establish this claim? The inescapable conclusion therefore, is that all true cognition is self-valid.

If there is invalid knowledge this is due to factors extrinsic to knowledge. False knowledge is made manifest by true cognition. It also sublates the wrong one.

justification, but calls for an extrinsic justifying principle, then it cannot be truth. The validity of knowledge pertains both to knowledge itself as well as to the instruments or means of knowledge. Only valid instruments can produce valid or true knowledge. Though the '*anupramāṇas*' are intermediaries between the subject and the object, still they participate in the immediacy of the *sākṣin*, because the self-luminosity of the *sākṣin* is the very condition of the possibility of knowledge and the final guarantee of truth.



Madhva's epistemology corresponds, therefore, to his ontology. The essential subject-object distinction in every cognition is the result of the subject-object distinction at the ontological level. The determinate character of knowledge reflects the fact that all objects possess qualities. So no reality is attributeless as the Advaitins say. The essential time-space element of our knowledge manifests the fact that reality is not necessarily eternal and unchangeable. Finally, the self-validity of true knowledge flows from the real relationship that exists between the conscious subject and the object of knowledge. One is turned to the other. Unless extrinsic factors intervene to vitiate this relationship, all cognitions should be valid.

### **The Internal Witness (*sākṣin*), the Unerring Agent and Judge of Validity.**

It has already been remarked that error results from the defects of the senses and of the object. But the *sākṣin* is the purest of all the senses. It is of the nature of knowledge (*jñānasvarūpa*) and it intuitively immediately its proper object. As Madhva writes, "error and truth, everything is known by the *sākṣin*; if the *sākṣin* be in any way defective how can there be any determination of truth."<sup>43</sup> Error surely is a fact, but from this fact one cannot conclude that all our knowledge falls under the category of error. Madhva says : "the direct experience of knowledge, of ignorance, of pleasure, pain and the uniqueness of the self is never falsified."<sup>44</sup> No illusion is possible as regards the self. Jayatirtha in his *Vādāvali* quotes A. V. III. 4.154 to prove this point. "Where there is certain and sure knowledge, there is the *sākṣi*-cognition. In such a

43. A. V. Text quoted by B. N. K. Sharma, Op. Cit. p. 114 Cf. also A. V. III. 4. 155.

44. VTV. no. 395 *viśeṣataś ca jñānājñānasukhadukhātma-bhedādiviśayāsyānubhavasya na mithyatvaṃ drṣṭam* cf. also nos. 349, 350. In no. 359 Madhva affirms that the objects of cognition may be unreal, but the fact of cognition itself is real.



case, there is no need of further verification of truth, which would lead to infinite regress, because no doubt is possible in respect of what is established by the 'internal witness.'<sup>15</sup> Without the firm conviction that in spite of some errors we can and do reach truth, life becomes impossible. This is what Jayatīrtha himself says: "Otherwise because doubt would never cease in any sphere, it would follow that all activity would fail."<sup>16</sup>

### Negation and Non-reality (*abhāva*, *asat*) in Madhva's thought

That Madhva is a realist needs no explanation. But the realisation of the extent to which he carries his realism is important for us in our study of the mādharma thought-form. It is this aspect of Madhva's thought which needs to be explained now.

"What is and what is not, are experienced by all."<sup>17</sup> This means that "*asat*" and "*abhāva*" (non-reality, negation or absence of a being) are *realities*, because they are objects of knowledge. This affirmation of Madhva is diametrically opposed to the Advaitic view that non-reality (*asat*) can never be the object of our consciousness i.e., of our knowledge. It is on this axiom, that they base their theory of error and consequently of the illusory nature of the world. Madhva contends that this basic principle of advaita is false because it is not in accord with our experience. He asks the Advaitin to analyse impartially the content of his consciousness, when he asserts that unreality is never presented to consciousness. If the Advaitin is not conscious of unreality how can he deny

45. Vādāvali p. 125 sudṛḍho nirṇayo yatra jñeyam tat sākṣidarśanam na parīkṣānavasthā syāt sākṣisiddhe tvasamśayam.

46. Ibid. p. 126 anyathā sarvatra samśayānapagamāt sarvavyavahāralopaprasaṅgāt.

47. VTV. no. 158.

it?<sup>48</sup> Every denial implies the knowledge of the object denied. If one denies unreality (*asat*), it means that he knows it.

But is there no difference between positive and negative judgements? Is there for instance, no difference between these two affirmations : the pot exists; and the pot is not here? Or more precisely, does the absence of the pot exist? The existence affirmed in a positive judgement is different from the "existence" affirmed in a negative judgement. "Unreality or negation exists" means "something does not exist." It is the negation of a positive reality. As he writes: "The negation of such or such an object is preceded by the knowledge of that object which assuredly exists elsewhere."<sup>49</sup> It must, however, be noted that positive reality and negative reality are totally different from an unreal object, e.g., rope-snake (in illusion). The negations (*abhāvas*) are in the world and they have a reference to a locus, whereas a "rope-snake" is nowhere in the world and has no reference to any locus.<sup>50</sup> In the treatise on "the realities" (*Tattvasaṃkhyāna*) Madhva very clearly asserts that the dependent realities fall into two categories, i.e., positive and negative realities (*bhāva* and

48. *ibid.* no. 144 *asataḥ khyātyayogād iti vadataḥ khyātir abhūn nā va, yadi nābhūn na tat khyātinirākaraṇaṃ yadyabhūt tathāpi.*

49. *Tadabhāvasya tajjnānapūrvaktvam cānyatra tasya sattvād eva dṛṣṭam* (VTV 239). On the problem of 'Negation' in Indian philosophy Cf. J.B. Bhattacharya 'Negation' On Madhva's views on this point. pp. 84-93. Does Madhva distinguish between 'asat' and 'abhāva'? Has he reflected deeply on the difference between "non ens" and the absence of a determined being? According to the general theory of Madhva, any object of knowledge is a determinate object. 'Asat' is an object of knowledge and hence must be determinate. So 'asat' cannot be "non ens" as such, but the absence of a determined object.

50. Cf. Siauue S. La Doctrine de Madhva Part I. Chap. 3.

abhāva).<sup>51</sup> In the *Tattvaviveka*, he says that the two groups of objects of knowledge are positive and negative realities. So, it is clear that for Madhva "negation" which is often called 'asat', has a certain ontological status.

Madhva's insistence that the 'non-existence of an object' is as immediately perceived as its existence is certainly directed against the bhāṭṭa and advaita theory that "non-existence" is made known to us by a means of knowledge specifically different from 'pratyakṣa' viz., "anupalabdhī (non-apprehension).

Epistemologically, the knowledge of non-existence, for instance, the absence of the pot or the absence of pleasure, is as true (yathārtha) as the knowledge of the positive reality, provided of course the reality is really absent.

Madhva does not accept absolute unreality or universal void. A judgement positing universal unreality would be a contradiction in terms, for absolute void is unthinkable. Universal void is so indeterminate that any judgement on it is impossible. What Madhva means is that absolute non-existence "has no counter entity" (pratiyogin). Without the acceptance of positive realities the very foundation of negative judgements is destroyed. This is the reason why absolute void is unthinkable.

We need not enter here into the various kinds of negative realities and their definitions.<sup>52</sup>

### **Error (bhrama)**

Madhva's conception of unreality logically leads us to his theory of error. True knowledge is defined as the cognition of an object as it is; naturally therefore, erroneous knowledge is non-objective knowledge.

51. *Tattvasamkhyāna*: bhāvābhavau dvidhe 'tarat; *Tattvaviveka*.

svavantram paratantram ca prameyam dvidvidham—  
dvidvidham paratantram ca bhavo 'bhava itiritah

52. Siauue, S. Op. Cit, Part I. Chapt. 3.

Jayaīrtha commenting on the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa* says that "erroneous knowledge has the property of attributing something (to an object) which it does not possess"<sup>53</sup> Madhva himself in the V T V defines erroneous or illusory cognition as the attribution of existence to the non-existent and non-existence to the *existent*.<sup>54</sup> But how an "unreal", non-existent, could appear as existent and a real existent as unreal, can only be explained by the defects of the senses or of the objects. A rope is mistaken for a snake because of the lack of light, of attention and other defects. The fact of error is revealed to us by the true knowledge, which corrects the false knowledge. The true knowledge, that the object lying before me is only a piece of rope lays bare to me the falsity of my previous judgement and corrects it.<sup>55</sup>

In his VTV, Madhva writes : "there can be no mistaking of a piece of shell for silver unless there is a real piece of shell, real silver and similarity between the two."<sup>56</sup> This is a very important statement because it is directed against the illusionism of the Advaitins. As Madhva writes : "If the world is a product of illusion then it would presuppose two real

### 53. Prl Tī.

54. VTV. no. 149 asataḥ sattvapratītiḥ sato' sattvapratītir ityanathā-pratītir eva bhrāntiḥ. Error thus necessarily implies the taking of a position, viz., an affirmation or negation. Doubt (*saṁśaya*) which does not take any position, is not an error. All judgements are either affirmations (*vidhi*) or negations (*niśedha*) precisely because, a judgment which is neither one nor the other would demand a medium or middle between being and non being, which is impossible. It is ultimately the *sākṣin* which perceives the non-existence or absence of realities such as the absence of pain and pleasure.

55. VTV. no. 138 the perception of things like a piece of shell as silver is determined to be an illusion only because it contradicts very strong perceptual evidence and not by mere logic.

56. *ibid.* no. 344 na hi satyaśukteḥ satyaraajasya tayos sādṛśyasya cābhāve bhrāntir bhavati.

worlds.”<sup>57</sup> It is because I already know two similar realities that I can mistake one for the other. “Nowhere do we have an illusion without two similar realities,” says Madhva.<sup>58</sup>

In this context it is of importance for us to analyse some of the deeper implications of the mādḥva theory of error. Madhva does not deny the fact of error; it forms part of our experience, and the Sacred texts (Śruti) which teach the subjection of the *jīva* to error confirm our experience. But what Madhva refuses to accept is that error is the rule and truth the exception. The opposite is true.

The Advaitin, taking the rare case of error (e.g., shell mistaken for silver) as example (udāharaṇa), tries to conclude to the falsity of all our ordinary knowledge. Just as ignorance is at the root of our false cognitions, so too ignorance is the cause of our perception of the world as real. Madhva contends that such a conclusion is unwarranted. According to the valid rules of reasoning, inference can be based only on a positive middle term and example. The advaitic inference to the falsity of all our ordinary cognitions, the basis of which is ignorance (avidyā) and the illustration of which is false knowledge can lead us only to error.

In Dvaita-Vedānta, at the level of *Sākṣin*, where immediacy is at its highest, no error is possible. The awareness of the self in its self-transparency and presence to itself is absolutely true. The modifications of the *manas*, such as pain and plea-

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57. *ibid.* no. 343 bhrāntikalpitatva ca jagataḥ, satyaṃ jagatdvayam apekṣitaṃ.

58. *ibid.* no. 348 ato na kutrāpi sadṛśasatyavastudvayaṃ vinā bhramaḥ. Dreams are also realistically explained by Madhva. In dreams a real world subsisting in the mind in the form of impressions (vāsanā) is seen as externally existing. (VTV. no. 345). It is Viṣṇu who produces at his pleasure dreams in us, with the help of the impressions stored in our minds. (BS Bh. III. 2. 1-5).



sure, are immediately present to the sākṣin.<sup>59</sup> A person may be erroneously told of the death of a loved one. Through that error he really suffers. This fact of suffering can never be annulled.<sup>60</sup> Even in erroneous knowledge, for ample, rope perceived as a snake, the facts (a) that there is a cognition, (b) that the knowledge produces in the knower certain effects, (c) that there exists a real object outside of us which is in contact with the senses cannot be denied.<sup>61</sup> So everything in error is not erroneous ! For Madhva error itself is a testimony to truth. If we cannot attain reality as it is, the very idea of error becomes meaningless.

In Dvaita-Vedānta, error is impossible at the level of *Sākṣi-manas*. To have error there must be the intervention of the senses and objects on the one hand and the uncalled for reaction of the *manas* on the other.

Madhva's very definition of error is a direct attack on the the advaita "*anirvacanīya khyāti vāda*, i. e., the view that the reality manifested in false cognition can be termed neither '*sat*' nor '*asat*'. If the 'rope-snake' were purely unreal, how could it appear to our consciousness as real? If it were real, how could it then be *annulled* later? So as we have said above it is neither real nor unreal, it is an indescribable, unnamable reality.

Dvaita-Vedānta rejects this view. In error, *sat* appears as *asat* or *asat* appears as *sat*, because error happens only in an

59. VTV, no. 396 Viśeṣaśca jñāna-ajñāna sukh-duḥkha ātmabheda ādi viśayasya anubhavasya na mithyātvaṃ dṛṣṭam.

AV. III. 4.155: icchā jñānam sukham duḥkham bhaya abhaya kṛpādayaḥ sākṣisiddhā na kaścidhi tatra saṃsayavān kvacit.

60. AV. II. 3.62 na duḥkhānubhavaḥ kvāpi mithyānubhavatām vrajet, na hi bādhaḥ kvacid dṛṣṭo duḥkhānubhavasya tu.

61. A. V. I, 4.91 Sarpabhramādāv api hi jñānam asty eva tādṛśam, tad evārthakriyākāri tat sad evārthakarakam.

affirmation or negation "Existence is of the nature of affirmation, and non-existence, of negation. Negation of negation necessarily posits reality. The first apprehension is necessarily that of existence or of non-existence."<sup>62</sup>

Going a step further, Madhva affirms that error does not affect merely a mode of the being either affirmed or denied but touches the whole reality. Reality is essentially and inseparably endowed with modes (*saviśeṣa-abheda*). We cannot therefore, think of a mode or specific character in isolation from the object or support. In false cognition therefore, we posit or affirm a being in its totality (e. g., silver or snake) and deny implicitly the reality that truly exists outside of us (shell or rope). In every erroneous cognition therefore, non-being is affirmed. This non-being is absolute, i. e., we are for instance affirming the existence of silver, which never existed in that particular locus, is not existing and will never exist. In error one affirms as existant something which really is not, and implicitly denies the existent.<sup>63</sup> Madhva asks his opponents to analyse their consciousness and see whether his views are not in accordance with their experience.

### Speciality (*viśeṣa*)

The category of "speciality" along with the category of "difference" (*bheda*) is of great importance in Dvaita-Vedānta. So let us briefly explain these two categories, before we sketch Madhva's refutation of the advaitic theory of the three levels of reality (*sattātraividhyam*).

In ordinary usage *viśeṣa* stands for particularity as opposed to generality (*sāmānya*). But the Dvaitins use this term in a special sense. For them, *viśeṣa* is not that reality which expla-

62. A.V. III. 3.145 *Bhāvatvaṃ vidhirūpatvaṃ niṣedha-  
tvam abhāvatā niṣedhasya niṣedho'pi bhāva eva balād  
bhavet, prathamapratipattis tu bhāvābhāvānīyamikā.*

63. A. V. I. 1.28 On how Madhva's theory of error differs from other theories. Cf. Siauue S. La Doctrine de Madhva p. 89 ff.

ins the individuality of particular existents. In fact the category of "bheda" (difference) accounts for individuality and *viśeṣa* accounts for the inner unity of individual beings.

Most systems of Indian thought accept the view that substantial reality is endowed with attributes. They do admit the reality of the relationship between parts and whole, action and agent. According to the Dvaitins one of the essential marks of knowledge is, that it is qualified. Knowledge always grasps a determinate qualified object. No source of knowledge has ever manifested to our consciousness an object without attributes. We know the various realities as white, black, intelligent, dependent, moving, acting and so on.

But one great difficulty needs to be solved by these schools : How to explain the relationship between the qualified and the quality (*guṇin* and *guṇa*) ? the whole and the parts (*avayavin* and *avayava*) ? the agent and the action (*kriyāvat* and *kriyā*) ? The Nyāya-vaiśeṣika schools admit the reality of these related terms and their real distinction. They relate the two *relata* by means of a third reality termed inherence (*samavāya*). But how then is the reality "*inherence*" related to the two *relata* ? By means of another "*inherence*" ? This will lead to infinite regress (*anavasthā*). The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas insist that *samavāya* is an essential, inhering reality. How then can we distinguish between an accidental relationship and an essential one ?

The first objection that the reality of inherence leads to infinite regress is countered by the logicians affirming that inherence is 'self-effective' (*svanirvāhaka*). In other words, inherence relates the two *relata* and it itself is self-related to the two terms. Hence it does not call for another reality to relate it to the *relata*.

To the second objection, apart from the admission of "conjunction" (*samyoga*) as an explanation of accidental, spatial union of two realities, no satisfying answer is offered.

If samavāya is accepted to be "self-effective", why do we not accept that substantial reality itself is "self-effective"? This means that the substrate of qualities, of actions and the whole have the power or force within themselves to link substance with qualities, agent with action, whole with parts.

The Dvaitins do accept an inner diversity in each individual existent. Our consciousness testifies to the difference between substance and attribute, agent and action, whole and parts. Yet it is equally true that no source of knowledge offers us the knowledge of the substratum separately from that of the attributes or of the agent separately from that of action. Colour is perceived as an integral part of cloth. The movement of the cloth in the air is not perceived as separate from the cloth itself. So on the one side we perceive that the relata are not identical. While on the other side we do perceive that one term is never seen as separate from the other.

In order to escape the difficulties posed by these incontrovertible facts, can we resort to the view of bheda-abheda (difference in non-difference)? Is it possible to affirm that the relationship between the two relata is one of *bheda-abheda*? The bheda-abheda theory is the result of the combination of two contradictory concepts. How can two realities be different and non-different at the same time? How can one even conceive a reality which is at once different and non-different from the relata? In N. S. I. 2.25 Jayatirtha offers an elaborate criticism of *bhed-abhedavāda*. If the 'bheda abheda' reality that relates the relata is accepted as real, then we need another such reality to link the first to the relata. That of course leads to infinite regress. If on the other hand the bheda-abheda reality is identical with the relata, then why accept such a reality?

It is in this connection Madhva introduces his specific theory of Viśeṣa. The A V has this important verse: Speciality (viśeṣa) is that potency or factor (śakti) which enables the one, undivided being to be described by different terms.



which are not synonymous among themselves. Such a factor called speciality exists in all things.<sup>64</sup> Let us explain this point by means of an example. When I say, the soul is intelligent, and the soul is endowed with being, I mean that the soul has the two attributes of intelligence and being. The one and the same being is said to be at once intelligent and being. Intelligence and existence are not synonymous and yet they do not introduce any inner division into the one reality, the soul. "Though there is no difference, i. e., inner division, in the reality, the language of difference is made possible by virtue of specialities."<sup>65</sup> The attributes are not completely distinct from the substance; such a view will lead us to infinite regress. Nor are they completely identical with the substance, for such a view will make the substance-attribute relationship meaningless. This is the reason why the A V says that speciality is the very substance which exists with innumerable attributes and is the cause of various predications. As Madhva puts it. "It is the substantive essence and also lends itself to being spoken of as if it were different from it."<sup>66</sup> The specialities are nothing but the

64. AV. I. 1. 109-110 *bhedahīne tvaparyayāśabdāntara-niyāmakaḥ viśeṣo nāma kathitaḥ so'sti vastuṣvaśeṣataḥ*. There are numberless attributes in each object, for each object can be viewed from numberless angles. On this whole problem of "Viśeṣa." Cf. Vādāvalī, pp. 134-135. On p. 134 Jayatīrtha writes: *viśeṣo nāma padārthaśaktirabhiśicyatām*. Rāghavendra's comments on Vādāvalī: *pādārthaśaktir iti na vastavāntaram*. In A. V. II. 3.68 Madhva writes; "all the viśeṣas are assuredly objects of Sākṣi perception and it is only in recognising them, all activity is done." What Madhva means is that viśeṣas are immediately grasped by the sākṣin. But viśeṣas are not cognized in their isolation, but by the same act, grasping the "specified individual objects."

65. VTV. no. 457 *bhedābhāve'pi tenaiva vyavahāraś ca sarvata iti* Cf. also VTV. Tī. pp. 355-356.

66. AV. *dravyam eva tato'nantaviśeṣātmatayā sthitaḥ nānāvvyavahṛter hetūr anantatvaṃ viśeṣataḥ* cit. by Sharma op. cit. p. 50 Cf. also VTV. no. 451,



inner forces (*śaktayaḥ*) of an entity. This means that the function of the *Viśeṣas* is to produce "unity-in-difference." Each being in Mādhvism is an inner unity, but not an amorphous unity. It is a unity in difference. The *viśeṣas* in Madhva's system go beyond what we usually call specification. They have their function wherever substantial unity is called for, e. g., between the whole and the parts, between the possessor of power and the attribute of power, between the essential nature and the parts, between the qualified and the qualities, between the agent and the action. In all these cases the factor called *viśeṣa* safeguards the "unity-in-difference" of each reality,<sup>67</sup>

Madhva admits eternal and non-eternal *viśeṣas*: The eternal substances have eternal specialities and the non-

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458. The *viśeṣa* functions with regard to itself as it does with reference to the rest of the features of the substance." The qualified object and the quality form one indissoluble relation. The attribute and the substance are not related by means of another attribute, which would lead us only to infinite regress. The relations of things are supported by *viśeṣas*; and the *viśeṣa* supports itself.

67. Cf. Sharma op. cit. pp. 45-57 and pp. 67-68. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika schools begin their reflection on the relation between whole and parts, attribute and that which has attributes, action and agent, class and individual, specification and eternal substances with the presupposition that they are not only distinct, but separate. Even the relation "*samavāya*" is considered to be absolutely separate from the two related terms. Such a position leads them into so many insoluble difficulties. The Advaitins on the contrary deny the reality of specifications, attributes, actions, etc. For them reality is ultimately unqualified inactive, one. Madhva starts his refutation of the substance-attribute, action-agent relations from the experience of the unity of individual beings. For Madhva *viśeṣa* is a true relation, though it does not create an identity between two separate terms. Between the 'dharma and dharmin; there is no separation (*abheda*); the unity of being is endowed with specifications.

eternal substances have non-enternal specialities. The eternal *viśeṣas* like their substances are never produced whereas the non-eternal *viśeṣas* arise and disappear.

### Difference (bheda)

From Madhva's theory of *viśeṣas* it follows that each substance with its inner unity-in-difference is different from other substances. Each substance is undivided in itself and divided from all the others. Difference is a primary datum of our consciousness and it is principally experienced in the subject-object distinction of cognition. "Generally each substantial nature is seen as different from all the others."<sup>68</sup>

The Advaitins' objections to the very category of 'difference' (bheda) are not easy to answer. For example, how is difference apprehended? As attributive? i. e., do we know difference as an attribute of the substance (a quality-qualified relation)? This is impossible because a quality-qualified relationship already presupposes difference (i. e., the difference between the substance and its attributes). Again, it cannot be said that difference is known by the knowledge of the two entities which differ. The cognition of these two entities in their mutual exclusiveness presupposes the cognition of their mutual difference. In both these cases the fallacy of mutual dependence is inevitable.<sup>69</sup>

Such difficulties have forced the Advaitins, for example, to deny the reality of the category of difference and to relegate it to the sphere of illusion. For them, reality is an undifferentiated whole. Difference is merely verbal.

For Madhva difference is real. Difference is not an element which is added to an entity from outside, but the very substantive nature of the entities. We saw that the *viśeṣas* in Madhva's thought stand for the very essential nature of a being in as

68. VTV. no. 127.

69. *ibid.* no. 119 For further explanations, VTV. Tī pp. 134-136.

much it possesses various inner forces which make real predications possible without in any way destroying the inner unity of being. Now, difference, too, is the essential nature of each entity or rather the whole entity in its relation of opposition to another entity. Madhva writes : "Just because difference implies the entity and the counter-entity (the two beings which are different from each other) the difference does not cease to be the essential nature of one entity just as much as its unity is. Unity is the very essential nature of an entity in as much it is one with itself."<sup>70</sup> Unity is being in its relation of identity with itself; and difference is being in its relation of opposition to another. These are but two aspects of a being. This is the reason why we apprehend difference in the apprehension of the essential nature of a being.

Madhva, as usual, pushes his insistence on the "individuality" and "difference" of beings to its ultimate consequence when he says : "Generally only after the cognition of the difference of a pot from all else, i. e., of the uniqueness of the pot, do we cognise its 'potness'"<sup>71</sup> This is an ontological and epistemological insistence on the particularity of being against its universality. It means that in Madhva thisness of an entity has primacy over "being" or "existence" which it has in common with others.

Madhva admits five fundamental differences between the different beings (pañcabheda). They are 1) the difference between God and the souls, 2) God and matter, 3) the difference between souls and matter, 4) between souls among themselves and finally 5) between different material beings. These differences are eternal, real and irreducible. Madhva thinks

70. *ibid.* no. 120 na ca dharmipratīyogyapekṣayā bheda-syāśvarūpatvam, aikyavat svarūpasyaiva tathātvāt.  
*ibid.* no. 122 bhedas tu svarūpadarśana eva siddhaḥ  
*ibid.* no. 123 asya bheda iti tu pādarthasya svarūpam  
 itivat Cf. also VTV. Tī. pp. 134-138

71. *ibid.* no. 129 sāmānyataḥ sarvavailakṣaṇye jñāta eva ghaṭatvādijñānaṃ.  
 also no. 130.

that the universe is known as *prapañca* because it consists of (these) great, five kinds of differences.<sup>72</sup>

### Madhva's Rejection of the Advaitic Levels of Truth and Reality.<sup>73</sup>

It must already be clear from the above exposition of his concepts of truth and reality that Madhva cannot accept the monist view of the levels of reality and truth. Madhva is convinced that only reality and non-reality are known by us. There is no proof whatever to show that something different from both exists.<sup>74</sup> The monist view is contrary to experience.<sup>75</sup> In the NS. Jayatīrtha says, "it is not true that being is of two sorts, primary and secondary; that which has the property of absolute non-contradiction is said to be reality in the primary sense; that, however, of which reality consists only in appearance is known as reality in the secondary

72. *ibid.* no. 325 prakṛṣṭaḥ pañcavidho bhedaḥ prapañcaḥ

73. On the monist doctrine of the levels of reality; Cf. Cammann, *op. cit.* pp. 46-47.

Das Sein der allerhöchsten Realität (paramārtha-sattva) kommt allein dem Brahman zu. Das Sein des Erfolgreich Wirkenkönnens (arthakriyāsāmartha-sattva) dessen Bestimmung die Māyā ist (māyopādhika) kommt dem Waltraum und den anderen Elementen zu, die die naturgesetzlich bedingte Welt darstellen. Das Sein, dessen Bestimmung das Nichtwissen ist (avidyopādhikasattva), ist dem Scheinsilber etc. eigentümlich. Bemerkenswert ist die Tatsache, dass sich bei den Bezeichnungen für die drei Seinsstufen die spätere Termini "vyāvahārika-sattva" für das Sein der empirischen Dinge und 'prātibhāsika-sattva' für das Sein des Scheinsilbers und anderer Scheinobjekte des täglichen Lebens noch nicht finden. Dies weist darauf hin, dass die Lehre von den drei Seinsstufen eine Schoepfung Prakāśātman ist."

74. VTV. no. 156 na ca sadasadvailakṣaṇyaṁ nāmāsti' tyatra kincin mānaṁ

75. *ibid.*, nos. 157, 158, 159.



sense."<sup>76</sup> Further the Advaitins admit quite frankly that all our different sources of knowledge including the sacred texts belong to the order of secondary reality, i. e., to the order of appearance or illusion. The main objection of the Dvaitins to the Monists is, how then, can one prove something real by means of a source of knowledge which is itself unreal? One can definitively prove the unreality of the rope-snake because of the right knowledge of the rope. But no such possibility is open to the Advaitin. Through none of the sources of knowledge accepted by him; can he reach true knowledge, because all of them pertain to the order of unreality. The Advaitin can never get out of his illusion and really prove that the world is illusory.

In the *Tattodyota*, Madhva attacks the monists from another angle. What do the monists mean by the expression "different from reality and unreality?" If they mean that the reality of the world is different from unreality, it means that the world is real. This is the dvaita position, too. When the monists assert that the world is different from reality, do they intend to say that the world is not the totality of reality? This also is true. In the NS. Jayatīrtha analyses the various meanings of "*sadasadvilakṣaṇa*" and refutes all of them.<sup>77</sup> Philosophically, the final argument or the fundamental principle on which all dvaita arguments are based, is that there is no middle term between being and non-being.

### Madhva's Classification of Reality.<sup>78</sup>

Though reality and unreality, truth and error stand 'in indiviso', it does not mean that various realities cannot be

76. NS. nanu ca dvividhaṃ saṃ mukhyaṃ amukhyaṃ ca tatra yasya sarvaprakāreṇa bādhitatvaṃ nāsti tam mukhyaṃ sat pāramārthikam iti ca gāyate, yasya tu satprātītiḥ eva sattā tad amukhyaṃ sat.

77. Cf. S. Siauve, op. cit. pp. 61-62.  
Cf. also Chap. II, "V. and the Reality of the Universe".

78. *Tattvasaṃkhyāna*, and *Tattvaviveka*.



classified into groups. Madhva in fact dedicates his whole treatise "Tattva Saṁkhyāna" to the classification of realities. First of all, the totality of beings falls into two radically different groups, viz., non-independent and independent realities. Independent reality is Viṣṇu alone, because he alone is independent of other beings as regards his essential nature, knowledge and activity. All other beings are non-independent as regards the above three aspects of their reality. The dependent beings may be either endowed with consciousness or devoid of consciousness. The non-conscious beings may belong to the group of positive reality or to the group of negative reality. Though the mādharma classification of beings is by no means exhausted by the categories mentioned above, still these show us clearly that the basis of the classification is the presence or absence of certain attributes in the beings classified. From other angles, too, realities can be divided in other ways, e. g., into substance (dravya), attribute, action, whole, parts and so on. Since these divisions and controversies over their legitimacy are not of any importance to our theme, we shall not discuss them here.

With these preliminary remarks on Madhva's epistemology and ontology, we can take up the real theme of this work, namely the concept of God in Madhva. The ideas briefly explained above form the basis of his thought, and all through the exposition of our theme, we shall be constantly referring to them.

## CHAPTER II

# MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUPREME BEING

### I

#### The Knowability of God

##### The Problem

In the Hindu tradition the problem of the existence of the Supreme Being was never posited in the radical way in which we posit it today. The problems which Madhva had to face at his time came from other sources. In fact, in the writings of Madhva, we never come across the question : Is there an Absolute Being ? The Indians of Madhva's time took the existence of God for granted on the basis of the 'sacred tradition' handed down to them.

But the question as to how the Absolute Being is known, that is, whether it is known through reasoning, as the Naiyāyikas maintained, or through 'revelation' alone as the Vedāntins asserted, was hotly debated in Madhva's time. Hence, as regards the knowability of God, the first question, which Madhva has to answer is : through which means of knowledge is the Supreme Being known ?

According to the mādharma understanding of Advaita, the Monists taught that *Brahman* was known only in an indirect way even through vedic testimony. In their view the infinite and unspeakable *Brahman* can never be directly expressed by words. This monist view makes Madhva look closer into the problem of the knowability of reality in general and of God in particular.

For Madhva, the problem of God was tied up with the question, whether Viṣṇu or Śiva was the Absolute Being. The

Vaiṣṇavas affirmed that Viṣṇu was the producer, sustainer and destroyer of the world; that Viṣṇu alone was the absolute and all-perfect being; that he was the liberator of the good and the punisher of the wicked.

The Śaivites, on the other hand, claimed that Śiva was the supreme being and that Viṣṇu was subordinate to him. In this sectarian controversy, Madhva as a true Vaiṣṇava had to defend and establish the absoluteness of Viṣṇu. The absolute Being, the Brahman, spoken of by the sacred texts is none other than Viṣṇu. This is what Madhva had to establish. The only way for him to achieve this objective was the exegesis of the sacred texts.

Once Madhva succeeded in showing that the Brahman taught by the Upaniṣads is the same as the Viṣṇu of Vaiṣṇavism, he still had to face other problems centering on the Absolute. The Advaitins for example, spoke of an Absolute without attributes and an Absolute endowed with attributes. Some of them maintained that the attributless Brahman when associated with ignorance (*māyā*) gave rise to *Īṣvara* or the *Brahman* with attributes. Do the sacred texts teach this *advaita* doctrine of '*saguṇa* and *nirguṇa Brahman*? Once again, we observe that the problem of God is posited in the context of scholastic controversy. These, then, are the problems which we have to discuss in this second chapter.

### **The Problem of the Knowability of the Absolute Being Viṣṇu is Knowable**

(1) "I always worship *Nārāyaṇa* who transcends *Lakṣmī* and the individual souls and who is known through the 'true scriptures'.<sup>1</sup> "Viṣṇu can only be known through the sacred texts and by the devotees alone."<sup>3</sup> The very sacred texts tell

1. VTV. no. 1 Cf. also B. S. Bh. I. 1.1 *Nārāyaṇam guṇais sarvairudīrṇam doṣavarjitam, jñeyam, gamyam.*

2. *ibid.* no. 3 *kevalāgamavijñeyo bhaktair eva na cānyathā.*

us that 'he who has not studied the Vedas cannot understand the 'Great One'<sup>3</sup> says Madhva. In his opinion, the sacred texts themselves teach us that Viṣṇu is knowable, though he is known only through the Vedas.<sup>4</sup>

(2) From the mād̥hva definition of reality and knowledge, which we have explained in the previous chapter, it is clear that in the system of Madhva, every reality is knowable. Reality is that which can become the object of knowledge. If any one should assert that Viṣṇu is unknowable, it can only mean that he is not a reality.

(3) The Sacred texts and the very first 'sūtra' of the Brāhma Sūtras prescribe that those who are desirous of liberation should inquire into *Brahman*.<sup>5</sup> This injunction presupposes or rather takes for granted that Brahman, the object of our inquiry is knowable. If Brahman were unknowable, such an injunction would be meaningless.

(4) Again, the sacred tradition as a whole teaches us that the Absolute Being is the giver of liberation, the final and supreme end of man. If *Brahman* were unknowable and unknown, then how could we expect our final end from him?

*Brahman*, therefore, is not unknowable, says Madhva.

But such a view seems to conflict with the sacred texts which declare that Brahman is the highest bliss from which both words and the mind recoil powerless. 'Brahman is not sound, has not sound for its property; it is not known by sound, by touch or by taste.' Brahman is said to be 'the unmanifest, the unspeakable etc.'<sup>6</sup> If we take those statements as they stand how can we say that Brahman is knowable?

3. Tait Br. III. 12.9. Madhva quotes various texts to prove his point. Cf. VTV. no. 4; B. S. Bh. I. 1.3.

4. BSBH. I. 1.3; AV I. 1.112 ff.

5. AV. I. 11 sa eva sarvavedārtho jījñāsyō'yaṃ vidhīyate jñāni priyatamo'to me taṃ vidvaṃ eva cāmṛtaḥ. Cf. also B.S.Bh. I. 1.1.

6. Kath Up. III. 15.

As far as Madhva is concerned, the texts which describe *Brahman* as indescribable and unspeakable, intend to teach us that Brahman can never be fully known, Though the Absolute Being is knowable, still he is not fully comprehensible. "The wise see the golden mount Meru, yet they do not see it fully. So also *Brahman* cannot be described, reasoned out and known fully."<sup>7</sup> This impossibility to comprehend Viṣṇu fully is the reason why he is said to be beyond words and knowledge.

In the system of Madhva therefore, Viṣṇu, is an object of knowledge though we can never fully and exhaustively know him. Madhva, therefore, rejects the agnostic position. Agnosticism is untenable both philosophically, that is, from the point of view of the nature of reality and knowledge, and theologically, that is, from the angle of Vedic testimony and the final end of man.

### **Viṣṇu is not known by means of Sense Perception**

Sense perception, as already noted in the first chapter arises out of the contact of the senses with the object. Such a 'sense-object' contact is limited to the sphere of the sensible. Even the sākṣin can intuit only itself, its characteristics and the modifications of mind, space, time etc. The Absolute Being, which stands beyond the sphere of the sensible and outside the domain of the individual self, cannot be reached by sense-perception. Madhva writes : "Viṣṇu cannot be reached by sense perception."<sup>8</sup> Both Trivikrama and Jayatīrtha say that sense perception unaided by revelation cannot attain Viṣṇu.<sup>9</sup> The final, immediate vision of Viṣṇu which a liberated soul possesses cannot be termed simply sense perception, for it arises because the unmanifest and subtle Viṣṇu by his favour manifests himself to the devout soul.

7. B. S. Bh. I. 1.5 avācyatvādikam tvaprasiddhatvāt paśyanto' pi na jānanti mero rūpaṃ vipaścita aprasiddher avācyam tad vācyam sarvāgamoktitaḥ ....

8. VTV. no. 3 na akṣajena na kenacit....

9. VTV Tī-p. 2 āgamānapekṣasya pratyakṣāder Nārāyaṇasya sadoṣatvādaḥ pravṛtṭyanupapatteḥ ....



### Reasoning and our Knowledge of Viṣṇu

(a) In the VTV., quoting the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa Madhva says : "Viṣṇu cannot be apprehended by mere reasoning."<sup>10</sup> Jayatīrtha says that the words 'mere' (*kevala*) is added in order to show that reasoning unaided by the sacred texts cannot reach Viṣṇu.<sup>11</sup> In his last and most important work, the *Anuṣṅgīyāna*, Madhva writes : 'Reasoning cannot in any way make known the Lord of the world.'<sup>12</sup> Jayatīrtha comments "we can through reasoning neither prove the existence of a first cause, nor can we indicate that this first cause is God."<sup>13</sup> The sacred texts declare, says Madhva, that the one who ignores the Vedas, does not know Viṣṇu, nor can one reach Viṣṇu by reasoning.

Viṣṇu's existence cannot be proved by inference because the opposite also can be proved by inference.<sup>14</sup> As we shall see a little later, Madhva is polemizing here against the logicians who asserted that God's existence could be proved by inference.

From these texts, it is clear that Madhva held the view that we come to know the Supreme Being through Vedic testimony.

(b) In the writings of Madhva, however, we find another set of statements which gives us the impression that according to him reason can reach God. In the B. S. Bh, Madhva quotes a long passage from Mokṣadharmā : 'the seed, the pulse, the seed of the banyan tree, butter, the process of

10. VTV. no. 2 na ca kevalatarkeṇa ....

11. VTV. T. p. 2 tatrakevalo vedādyānukūlyarahitaḥ

12. AV. I. 1.116 tarko jñāpayitum śakto neṣitāraṃ kathāṃcana.

13. N.S. īsitāraṃ jagatkartāraṃ kathāṃcana sāmīnyato viśeṣatas' ca

14. Kath up. II. 9

VTV. no. 62 na cānumānāt tat siddhir viparyaya-  
numātum śakyatvāt.

manuring, reminiscence of a previous life, the loadstone, the lenses, the draught of water, dissolution of the body into its elements after death—are sure means (of concluding to the existence of spiritual beings) and thus the materialistic position is refuted.<sup>15</sup>

If we look into the text in its proper context and into the commentaries of Trivikrama and Jayatīrtha we find that Madhva is here trying above all to refute the materialist contention that we have only sense knowledge.<sup>16</sup> For example the principle of causality, the imperceptible growth of a tree from a watered seed etc., which are in no way the immediate data of sense experience, call for other means of knowledge. All know, for example, that we derive benefits from propitiating the gods. This fact, however, is known only from the Vedas. So, as hinted above, Madhva's primary purpose in quoting the above text is to establish that 'reasoning' and 'vedic testimony' must be accepted as valid means of knowledge to account for the various known and accepted data. However neither Madhva nor his commentators take up the idea of causality, and argue to the existence of God.

As a matter of fact in the commentary on the same *Sūtra*, Madhva explicitly says that no inference unaided by śruti can make Viṣṇu known to us.<sup>17</sup> If we take the mādхва refutation of the Sāṃkhya and Cārvāka views on the production of the world, we find that Madhva uses both the principle of causality and the principle of order in the world to show that unintelligent matter could not have been the cause of the world.<sup>18</sup> Again, Madhva's statement that dependent and limited souls

15. B. S. Bh. I. 1.3 Citation from Mbh. XII. 220.30-31.

16. Tat. Di. pp. 34-35

17. B. S. Bh. I. 1.3 na cānumānasya niyataprāmāṇyaṃ śrutisāhāyarahitam anumānaṃ na kutracit niścayāt sādhayet artham. Tat. Di. p. 33 śrutisāhāyarahitam anumānaṃ pratyakṣam ca śraute'rthe na kvāpi pramāṇam

18. Cf. Chapter II, Part I.

could not have been the cause of the world, is based on the implicit idea that a contingent being can never be the first cause.<sup>19</sup>

Because of these statements, Von Glasenapp thought that according to Madhva, 'the existence of God could be proved by means of reason, though his nature could be grasped only with the help of the Vedas.'<sup>20</sup> But the truth of the matter seems to be that Madhva has never made such a distinction between the existence of Viṣṇu and his nature. No one can deny that in Madhva there are elements of proofs for the existence of God. But he has never developed them, nor has he said that they have any validity when they are not aided by 'śruti'. Jayatīrtha's words that Viṣṇu, although known in a general way through sense perception and reasoning, is yet known well only through the sacred texts, are not at all clear.<sup>21</sup> For he writes a little later 'Viṣṇu, who is absolutely different from matter, from the souls and from Lakṣmī is known as distinct from all (viśiṣṭatayā) only through the sacred texts.'<sup>22</sup> This means that God or the Absolute Being as Absolute can be known from the Veda alone.

The dvaita attitude to reasoning and 'revelation' and the relationship of these two sources of knowledge as regards our

19. *ibid.*

20. Gottes Dasein ist beweisbar....Das Dasein Gottes ist jedoch nicht nur etwas, das wahrscheinlich, weil unwiderlegbar ist, sondern etwas, das durch die Vernunft gefordert wird. (Von Glasenapp, Madhva's Philosophic des Viṣṇu-Glaubens. p. 27.) Über das Wesen Gottes und die Eigenschaften kann man weder durch sinnliche Wahrnehmung noch auch durch Schlussfolgerung zu wahren Erkenntnissen kommen. (*ibid.* p. 28)

21. VTV Ṭi. p. 2 āgamair viśiṣṭatayā vilakṣaṇatayā ca jñeyam-pratyakṣānumānābhyām anythāpi jñāyate.

22. *ibid.* p. 2

knowledge of God, may be seen from the analysis of the notion of *Kārya*, i. e., the thing to be done.<sup>23</sup>

It may be briefly remarked here that the Dvaitins analyse the notion of *kārya* in order to refute the Mīmāṃsā understanding of *kārya*. Jayatīrtha says that 'kārya' can mean either that which is desired (the end or object of our desire), or the means or the action to reach the desired end.<sup>24</sup> Jayatīrtha continues : "at first there is assuredly the knowledge of the possibility of attaining a good; then there is the act of willing; afterwards the effort." All these different stages occur in a person with regard to an end or a good to be attained and which is known as good and attainable and is willed and striven after by the subject, i. e., the person.<sup>25</sup> Jayatīrtha continues his analysis : "nevertheless one does not in any part of the world come across an object which can claim for itself the whole of human activity, that is, the totality of willing and striving. That which is 'Supreme' (*preyaḥ*) is loved supremely."<sup>26</sup> That which is excellent is that which is unconditioned. So the only end or good which can claim for itself and awaken in us the totality of our willing and love, is the Supreme Good.

This analysis of the inner structure of human activity leads Jayatīrtha to postulate the existence of God; at least the possi-

23. "According to Mīmāṃsā, the purpose of the entire Veda is to lay down injunctions....The Veda need not, and does not, say anything about existing things, because such things can be perceived. Further the Veda, which is meant to show wherein, the end of man lies, and how to achieve it, should only inform us about what we should do, and what we should not". (K. S. Murthy *Revel and Reason in Advaita Vedānta*. pp. 214-5). The mādhva analysis of "kārya" is intended to refute this doctrine of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, though it has some reference to God's existence.

24. NS *dvidvidham khalu kāryam iṣṭam iṣṭasādhanaṃ ca*

25. NS cited by S. Siauve. op. cit. p. 79.

26. *ibid.* *preyo 'tiśayena priyam/atiśayaḥ ca nirupādhik-atvaṃ.*

bility of the existence of the Supreme Good (iṣṭam). But Jayatīrtha adds 'if the Vedas had not told us that the Supreme Good exists, it would remain a mere possibility. But since the Vedas tell us of It's existence, it is not a pure hypothesis.'<sup>27</sup>

### Madhva's Refutation of the Proofs for the Existence of God.

As mentioned above there are a certain number of incipient reasonings in Madhva's writings that can lead one to the knowledge of the Supreme Being. Still Madhva following the classical vedāntic tradition holds the view that independent reasoning can never reach the certain cognition of the Absolute. We have now to analyse the dvaita refutation of the Nyāya contention that Īśvara can be known by means of inference.<sup>28</sup>

"God's existence cannot be proved by inference because the opposite also can be proved by inference. If it is argued that the world must have had a cause, because it is an effect like a jar, produced by a potter, it may be countered by a contradictory inference that the world could not have been produced by a creator because the world as a whole is not an effect as we conceive it, as the self (soul) is not 'created' by a cause like a potter. If it is objected that the counter inference is vitiated by the fact that it applies only to entities that are not effects like the self and not to the world as a whole, it can be answered with equal force that the first inference is vitiated by the fault that it applies only to products like a jar

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27. *ibid.* na kevalam sambhāvanā, śrutis cātrāsti. On this whole point. vide : S. Siauve. *op. cit.* pp. 79-80.

28. Among the Hindu thinkers, the Naiyāyikas above all worked out a number of proofs for the existence of God. For a summary of the Nyāya proofs. vide : K. S. Murthy. *Op. Cit.* p. 196 ff. Also Cf : H. Jacobi. *Die Entw. der Gottesidee bei den Indern.* p. 49 ff. Madhva has not systematically refuted the various proofs proposed by the Naiyāyikas.



manufactured by embodied beings and not to the world as a whole."<sup>29</sup>

In his A. V., Madhva writes "an independent inference, that is, an inference not aided by śruti, cannot prove the existence of God, because using the same method and with the same necessity one can show that being (cause) in question is only human and not God. Reasoning is not capable of reaching the Lord of the universe."<sup>30</sup> Again: "Reasoning is not in any way capable of making known the Lord" ('tarko jñāpayitum śakto neṣitāram kathañcana" A. V. I. 1.116) Commenting on this passage Jayatīrtha remarks

29. VTV. nos. 62 ff. cānumānāt tatsidhir viparyaye-  
nāpyanumātum śakyatvatvāt; vimataṁ sakartṛkaṁ  
kāryatvād ghaṭavad ityukte-vimataṁ vikartṛkaṁ,  
asmāt sammatakartṛrahitatvād ātmavad ityanumān-  
avirodhāt akāryatvam upādhir ityukete śarirajany-  
atvam itaratṛpi-upādhir. In Yāmuna's "Āgamapr-  
āmānya" (no. 25) we find a similar argument.  
Against the Mīmāṃsakas who hold that the world  
originates and is destroyed through the *karma* of souls,  
Yāmuna argues that it is impossible to prove the  
origination and destruction of the world. The origin  
and destruction of a pot for example are evident to us.  
But such is not the case with the world's origin and  
destruction.

30. AV. 1. 113-4 aprāmānyānumā ca syān na pṛthak  
cānumeśvare puṁstvahetubalādeva pūrvoktenaiva  
vartmanā. "Le contre syllogisme enonce par  
Jayatīrtha sous cette forme "Siva n'est pas cause du  
monde parce qu'il est un être humain comme  
Devadatta" signifie que le raisonnement qui voudrait  
prouver Dieu a partir de l'existence du monde ne  
prouverait pas la nature divine de l'univers; il ne  
depasserait pas la notion d'un "artisan", semblable a  
tout artisan humain. (S. Siauve, Les Noms Vediques  
de Viṣṇu, p. 19)

"Āgamaprāmānya" No. 28 contains a similar  
argument. We do not intend in any way to say that  
Madhva has borrowed his arguments from Yāmuna  
or from any one else. But we do feel that many of  
these and other tenets form the common patrimony of  
many Indian schools.

in his N. S. : "The Lord here stands for the cause of the world. The existence of such a Lord cannot in any way be proved by reasoning."

What the Dvaitins mean by these statements is, that any reasoning which has its point of departure in the existence of the world, can reach only 'an artisan' of the world similar to a human artisan. We can never prove that the cause of the world arrived at is God.

Madhva writes further : 'An inference which pretends to make known the Supreme Lord is an inference surpassing its limits (atiprasaṅga). Such an inference would be like the statement 'the horse has horns, or the sky has flowers, or the barren woman has children because these are realities.'<sup>31</sup> As Jayatīrtha comments : 'these reasonings suffer from the defect of 'atiprasaṅga' (surpassing its limits), that is, the reason adduced (hetu) is heterogeneous to the conclusion.'<sup>32</sup>

In these quotations, we have the substance of Madhva's objections against the Nyāya proofs for the existence of God. The arguments of Madhva do not need much explanation, because they are clear. If we take the 'principle of causality and the argument for the existence of God from the 'product-character' of the world, we find that Madhva implicitly limits the cause-effect relation to the empirical, verifiable sphere. For him the effects are pots, cloth etc., which are produced by embodied beings and which are immediately experienced by us as effects. The world as a whole, however, is never experienced by us as a product. This idea of cause and effect

31. AV. I. 1. 11-119.

32. NS. *Īśvarānumānasya pramāṇatāyām eteṣām api prāmāṇyaṃ syād iti śeṣaḥ*. Similar refutations of the proofs for the existence of God are to be found in the works of Rāmānuj. (Śri Bhāṣya I. 1. 3) The Mīmāṃsakas too refute the arguments for the existences of God. "Only embodied beings can produce something. Since God has no body, he cannot create the world". There is no possibility of proving that God is the creator of the world". (Vide. J. Sinha. A Hist. of Ind. Phil. Vol. p. 854 ff.).

derived from sense experience and cause-effect relationship although, not directly perceived but inferred from the experience of invariable connection between a given type of cause and an effect, cannot be applied to supra-sensible realities. The world as a whole and its relation to a Supreme Cause do not pertain to the sphere of the sensible. In the domain of the supersensible, inference has no validity unless it is based on śruti.

Madhva would surely admit that every effect has a cause. What he denies is that the whole can be apodictically proved to be an effect. Moreover, the only causes we know of are embodied beings. These are usually human or secondary causes.

From these few remarks, it is clear that Madhva does not consider the principle of causality known through perception within the frame-work of a philosophy of being (as the existential dependence of a contingent being on the Supreme Being) but within the limited sphere of the particular idea of sensible being. Of course, the Vedas can and do teach us that the Lord is the cause of the world.

The argument that the world calls for an Omniscient Cause is dismissed by Madhva on the ground that it is not really valid. Madhva admits that the cause of the world knows the world; but that the cause is omniscient is not proved.<sup>33</sup>

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33. AV. II. 117 kimcij jūatvaṃ hi puṃstvena śakyam  
sādhayitum sukham

NS na hi yo yat kartā, sa sakalam taj jñātīti niyamaḥ  
According to AV. I. 1.116 Madhva holds that a cause can produce something without knowing everything of the product. This is what we see in all human causes and products. A gardener who "makes" a garden does not know all the trees or all about the trees. Similarly the author of the world need not be omniscient. Madhva brings in the term 'maker of a garden or forest' in order to show his opposition to Śaivism, which terms Śiva 'maker of forests', 'the carrier of mountains' etc. (S. Siauue. *Le Doctrine de Madhva*. pp. 240-241).

Madhva does not explicitly consider the other arguments brought forward by the Naiyāyikas and refute them in his writings. Perhaps his contention that an inference which pretends to make known the supreme Lord, suffers from the defect of 'atipransaṅga' is valid for other arguments also.

We may ask the question why Madhva, the great realist, did not develop the rational proofs for the existence of God, which to some extent and in an undeveloped way are present in his writings. Madhva speaks of the limited and dependent character of the souls and the world. He speaks of the order in the world. In fact, Madhva does indeed use these arguments to refute those schools which asserted that matter or the souls or the gods were the cause of the world. But positively, that is, in order to prove the existence of God, he does not use them,

Many are the reasons for this attitude of Madhva towards the use of "*anumāna*" to know God. First of all his vedāntic-vaiṣṇava position did not allow him to show the least sympathy to the Nyāya system, which asserted that God's existence could be proved by reasoning. If God's existence and nature could be the object of reasoning, why should we have the Vedic testimony at all? It may be good to remind ourselves that Rāmānuja also could not reconcile himself to the view that the Absolute Being could be the object of inference. Fideism and Traditionism form essential traits of Vedāntic Thought.

Madhva's idea of inference based on causality and for that matter, of inference in general cannot be used to prove the existence of an absolute, spiritual being. The principle of causality, as conceived by Madhva is only a *drṣṭa* or 'sāmānyato *drṣṭa*' principle and hence it embraces only a particular group of beings (sensible beings). Therefore this principle is inapplicable to supra-sensible realities.

The firm faith of Madhva, that Viṣṇu alone is God, did not allow him to make a distinction between the Absolute



Being (the cause of the world) and the name by which the Absolute Being is called. No inference can tell us that Viṣṇu is the cause of the world. If Madhva had admitted that the Absolute Being could be known by inference, then the name by which that being is called e. g., Śiva or Viṣṇu would have been of little importance. As a true Vaiṣṇava, Madhva could not separate the name, Viṣṇu, from the Absolute Being. One knows from 'śruti' alone, that Viṣṇu is the Absolute Being and consequently one knows only from 'śruti' that the world has a cause.

Perhaps the most profound philosophical reason for the vedāntic rejection of inference as a way to prove the existence of the Supreme Being is his transcendence. For all the Vedāntins, the Absolute is the unlimited, the infinite, the incomprehensible. One cannot limit the Absolute Reality by an appeal to causality or order experienced in this world. Any proof for God's existence which ascends from a finite mind and which makes use of finite realities as the link with the Supreme Being will destroy his transcendence. The absoluteness of the Supreme Being is more experienced by the inadequacy of the finite beings and of the human mind than by any proofs. Only a means of knowledge that surpasses the ordinary human sources of knowledge and that somehow has its roots in the Supreme Being himself, can give us any genuine knowledge of him. It is remarkable to notice that Madhva does not explicitly contradict the Nyāya proofs for the existence of Īśvara. To contradict the proofs directly may mean that the world has no cause, a view which Madhva rejects. What he tries to stress is the inconclusive character of the proofs. The maker of the world, whom the proofs seek to establish is not necessarily God.

Though the Lord's reality cannot be demonstrated by sense perception or anumāna, still once it is revealed to us, both the above means of knowledge can help us to realize ever more vividly that he is the basis of our experience of the



world. So also rational demonstration can show that the knowledge of the Lord we have from śruti is not false. This general vedāntic conviction is based on the implicit principle that reason and revelation do not contradict each other.

The above reasons though not explicitly expressed in any of his writings, seem to be at the bottom of Madhva's devaluation of reasoning. Despite what has been said, one should not suppose that reasoning is absolutely useless in our effort to know the Absolute Being. As already mentioned, reasoning supported by 'śruti' can make Viṣṇu known to us. When we know from the sacred texts that Viṣṇu is the cause of the world, that the world is a product supported and destroyed by Viṣṇu, we can apply to these data of śruti our categories of cause and effect and our syllogistic reasoning. In our ordinary reasoning, validity is derived from the observed invariable connection between the *probans* and the *probandum* (e. g. smoke and fire). But in a reasoning which is aided by 'śruti', the validity ultimately comes from śruti itself. It is 'śruti' which tells us that the world is an effect and that Viṣṇu is the cause of this effect.

Reasoning has another function to perform in our effort to know the Absolute Being. In the study of the sacred texts we have to use reasoning in order to interpret them according to the right canons of interpretation.<sup>34</sup> The above exposition of Madhva's thought on the problem of the means through which Viṣṇu is known, shows that according to him the sacred texts alone can make Viṣṇu known to us. The other two means of knowledge namely, sense perception and inference have only a subordinate and ancillary role to play in our search for the knowledge of Brahman. Madhva is particularly mistrustful of those who place their confidence in the power

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34. AV. 123 upakramādiliṅgebhyo nānyā syād anumā  
tataḥ

of reasoning.<sup>35</sup> As a Vedāntin and a Vaiṣṇava, he therefore, accepts the doctrine that the sacred texts are the only means at our disposal to reach the knowledge of God, of liberation and of right conduct.

## II

### **The Sacred Tradition and our Knowledge of Viṣṇu**

From the exposition of Madhva's position on the knowability of Viṣṇu and the means to know him, it is fairly clear that the sacred texts or the 'Sacred Tradition' (āgama) is the primary means through which we come to know the Absolute Being. The other two means of knowledge, namely, sense perception and inference have only a subordinate and ancillary role to play in our search for the knowledge of Brahman.

### *THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN TRUE AND FALSE TRADITION (sadāgama and durāgama)*

#### *The PROBLEM.*

Each sect claims that its sacred texts alone are authoritative. The Śaivites for example claim that their 'śaivite

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35. Madhva's attitude towards those, who placed their trust in the power of logic may be seen from the following story quoted by him in his BSBh. II. 2.17 "In the Mokṣa-Dharma, Indra in the form of a jackal says 'I have attained to this state, being devoted to the study of tarka (logic) which is based upon mere perception and is productive of no good.'"

The Mādhvas accept the fact that Viṣṇu is the cause of the world and that the world is a product. But this fact is known only through "śruti."

The ordinary inferences from cause to effect, or from effect to cause, or inferences based on 'sāmanyato-dṛṣṭa' type of "vyāpti" when not supported and sustained from inside by "śruti" cannot transcend the level of the perceptible.

Madhva surely accepts the view that through "sākṣi-perception" we can come to know the nature of things, their invariable relationships (vyāpti) and the power inherent in certain realities to produce certain effects (principle of causality).

scriptures' alone are true, for they alone proclaim the absolute greatness of Śiva.<sup>36</sup> We have thus a multiplicity of texts and traditions. Have we any criteria or norms to distinguish the true from the false tradition?

The criteria used by Madhva are worth noting here because they show us his faith in Viṣṇu as the guiding light of his whole thought--

(1) Does a given text or rather tradition teach the greatness and supremacy of Viṣṇu? If it does, then it is true. Therefore, the Śaivite or Kāpila traditions which extol the greatness of Śiva and Kapila are false.<sup>37</sup>

How could these false traditions exist side by side with the true one? How could Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord let Śiva and others be proclaimed Supreme? According to Madhva, the false traditions have a certain 'non-salutary' function to fulfill, in as much as they keep away the wicked souls, who are unfit for liberation from the true knowledge of Viṣṇu. If only the true and good tradition existed, then the wicked souls by studying it could come to know the Truth. So, for the sake of this non-salutary purpose, Viṣṇu lets Śiva and other minor divinities compose such texts.<sup>38</sup> Since the com-

36. BSBh. II. 1.1 with the comm. of Trivikrama. pp. 163-4. Cf. also VTV. no. 1, AV. I. 1.121.

37. VTV. no. 2 durāgamāstadānye ye tair na jñeya Janārdanaḥ Cf. also VTV Tī. p. 5

38. AV. 94 darśanantaramūlatvān mohārthaṃ cājñayā Hareḥ NS. tathā ca vipralambhamūlatvam uktam bhavati : A similar argument against the validity of "Śaiva" and "Pāśupata" scriptures is to be found in Yāmuna's 'Āgamaprāmāṇya' (Nos. 84-86). "For Thou, strong-armed Rudra must cause deluding doctrines to be expounded, the deceptions of jugglers and the like as well as conflicting practices. Having shown that the fruit can be won with little effort, you must delude all these people quickly" (Varāha-Purana LXX. 36 quoted in Āgamaprāmāṇya No. 86). Other texts from the same Purāṇa teaching the same doctrine are cited by Yāmuna. But Yāmuna does not say that Viṣṇu caused Śiva to expound the false scriptures.

position of the heterodox texts takes place at the command of Viṣṇu, his greatness and supremacy remain unimpaired.

(2) Another criterion, by which the true tradition can be distinguished from the false ones may be termed : 'The actual attainment of verifiable results'.<sup>39</sup> What Madhva means by this is the following : the false traditions promise their followers many 'visible' results. But in fact, through the practice of the injunctions laid down in these traditions, one does not attain the promised results; or at least one does not realize them within the declared time and in the declared manner. So these traditions which make such erroneous promises, must also be erroneous.<sup>40</sup>

But is it not legitimate to question the validity of the vaiṣṇava tradition on the ground that the results promised in it are also seen to be unrealised ? Madhva says that such an objection against the vaiṣṇava tradition is not legitimate because the results promised in it are attained by the souls fit to realise them. If it should happen that one soul does not attain the results, then it is his previous 'karma' that should account for the failure.<sup>41</sup> In the case of non-vaiṣṇava traditions, however, their truthfulness is known, claims Madhva, only from the 'experienced realisation of the promised results.' So, if these should promise fruits, which cannot be seen in experience, their falsity is settled beyond all doubt. Madhva's claim, as we can see, springs from his faith in Viṣṇu.

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39. AV. I. 1. 112-113

NS : Śivena racitaḥ śaivaḥ, taiḥ samprātaṁ taduktasā-dhanāuṣṭhāna samprāptaṁ drṣṭaṁ drṣṭiḥ pratyakṣam iti yāvat drṣṭena phalena tu tadvākyaṣya prāmāṇyam anumiyate.

40. BSBh. II. 1. 2-3.

41. *ibid.* II. 1.5 "If what is declared in them (in the true scriptures) should not be realised by a person, then it is his previous "karma" that should account for it....; the promised results are achieved by persons according to their eligibility (adhikāritva).

(3) The above criterion is based on the epistemological principle that true knowledge is self-valid, though falsity can be established only by something extrinsic to it.<sup>42</sup> The falsity of the heterodox tradition is established by means of the non-attainment of the promised results. The validity of the Vaiṣṇava tradition on the other hand is self-established. This implies, that the ultimate criterion to distinguish the true tradition from the false ones is the "non-personal" character and the eternity of the sacred texts, which make them self-valid beyond question.<sup>43</sup> The Purāṇas etc., are valid because they follow faithfully the 'śruti'. The heterodox traditions are neither non-personal nor eternal. They do not faithfully follow the non-personal 'śruti' either. This point will be explained more in detail when we deal with the Vedas.

### Texts Belonging to the True Tradition (*sadāgama*)

In his VTV, Madhva quotes the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa which enumerates the true scriptures; 'The true scriptures consist of the four Vedas beginning with the Ṛg Veda, the Bhārata, the whole of the Pañcarātrāgama, the original Rāmāyaṇa, the Purāṇas corroborating these and all the other works that follow these.'<sup>44</sup> Others are false scriptures and through them Viṣṇu cannot be known. Similar lists of 'canonical works' are to be found in the other works of Madhva.<sup>45</sup>

42. Cf. Chapter-1.

43. BSBh. II. 1.4

44. VTV. no. 3

45. BSBh. I. 1. 1; II. 1.5; III. 3.3 etc.

In A V III. 3, 90-91 Madhva gives a more elaborate list of valid scriptures. In this list Madhva speaks of Sāṃkhya and yoga systems (i. e., the systems taught in the epic, Mahābhārata). The Sāṃkhya-darśana on the other hand is rejected by Madhva. He mentions a text dealing with logic. Mr. C. R. Krishna Rao has collected and published all the 'brahma-tarka' texts quoted by Madhva in his various works under the title: 'Brahma-tarka' and



The works which constitute the true tradition fall into two essentially different groups : revelation (śruti) and tradition (smṛti). Śruti is 'non-personal' and eternal, whereas 'smṛti' is personal and non-eternal. The four Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and the "Pāñcarātra āgamas" and the Upaniṣads belong to the first group and the other works to the second.

### Revelation (śruti) is Non-Personal (apauruṣeya)

The first characteristic of śruti is that it is non-personal. This doctrine, with some modifications, is common to the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta schools.<sup>46</sup>

Adhering to this traditional doctrine, Madhva affirms that the Vedas have no speaker or author. 'That the Vedas are not the compositions of anyone is evident by itself; for the author of the Vedas is unascertained.'<sup>47</sup> Jayatīrtha tries to prove this point by means of a syllogism : the Vedas are non-personal, because the author is unknown, just like ether.<sup>48</sup> Now Jayatīrtha himself raises an objection against this argu-

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Madhva, Udupi, 1960). Then he mentions 'Mīmāṃsā' comprising 'Karma-Mīmāṃsā, (dharma-sūtra) Brahma Mīmāṃsā (Brahma-sūtra) and Deva-Mīmāṃsā (Ct. A V 1.1.81). (The Deva-Mīmāṃsā or Deva-Śāstra is an unknown text). On the whole problem of the canon of 'śruti' and 'smṛti' and especially on the point of Madhva's defence of 'Pāñcarātra-āgama' Cf. S. Siauve : Le Doct. de Madhva p. 22 ff.).

46. On the Mīmāṃsā views on the non-personal character of the Vedas. Cf. K. Bhatta : Ślokavārttika, Transl. G. Jha, p. 553 ff. On the Advaita concept of "apauruṣeyatā" see K. S. Murthy op. cit. p. 44 ff.
47. VTV. no 14 apauruṣeyatvaṃ ca svata eva siddham vedakartur aprasiddheḥ

This argument is similar to the Mīmāṃsaka view. "In as much as we have neither any remembrance of an author nor any need of any such--no author is wanted for the Veda." (Ślokavārttika. p. 353).

48. VTV. Tī p. 26 vedo 'pauruṣeyo' pramitakartṛkatvāt gaganavat

ment. Even though the author is unknown, still it does not necessarily mean that the Vedas have no author.<sup>49</sup> Madhva may have had a similar objection in mind when he wrote : "since the author of the Vedas is unknown, it is unwarranted to postulate such an author." "On the analogy of worldly testimony (writings) we cannot argue that the Vedic testimony also must have had some personal author, because worldly testimony cannot be conceived of as authorless."<sup>50</sup> What Madhva means by this statement is the following : "Personal, human testimony comes down to us as having an author, whereas the Vedas come down to us with the essential mark of 'authorlessness'. No other testimony reaches us as authorless in such a continuous tradition. So, if a statement were to be made by someone and were to be named, Veda, it does not become equal to the Vedas as there is no continuous tradition to that effect."<sup>51</sup>

Madhva tries to establish the non-personal character of Vedas by another argument which he seems to have taken from the Mīmāṃsakas.<sup>52</sup> He writes : 'It cannot be argued that there can be no text which is non-personal because in the absence of a non-personal authority, *dharma* (morality in general) which is admitted by all the schools will go unproved.'<sup>53</sup> *Dharma* etc., are supersensible realities which cannot

49. VTV Ṭī p. 26.

50. VTV. no. 17 na ca laukikavākyavat sakartṛkatvam tasyākartṛkatvaprasiddhyabhāvāt.

51. ibid. no. 18

52. Ślokaṃvārttika p. 114 "Sense perception and other sources of knowledge cannot give us any knowledge of *dharma*." ibid. p. 59. The only means to know *dharma* and *adharma* is the Vedas.

53. VTV. no. 6 na cāpauruṣeyaṃ vākyam eva nāstīti vācyaṃ, tadabhāve sarvasamayābhimatadharmādyasiddheḥ.

Cf. also VTV, Ṭī p. 12 ff.

In A V I. 1.68 Madhva writes : In is necessary in fact, to accept that the Veda is eternal, for otherwise *dharma* and so on cannot be established"

be either immediately perceived or inferred by us. In order to know these realities we need a third and sure means of knowledge, namely, non-personal testimony. If any one (the materialist) denies the reality of *dharma* and *adharma*, he has no right to be called a teacher of philosophical truth. Such a person does not help the world by his teaching; on the contrary, he spreads mutual hatred and murder.<sup>54</sup> Since he denies the final liberation, he has no motive (purpose) for helping the world.<sup>55</sup>

Such is Madhva's argument against the materialists who deny the authority of the Vedas, on the ground that man has only one means of knowledge, sense perception. Madhva tells the materialist, that without the acceptance of the Vedas, no one can come to know the moral truths and the fruits derived from the practice of religious morality. Even the materialists want to keep peace and order in the world. From what source do they know the social order and the inviolable rules which govern society, if not from the Vedas?<sup>56</sup> The materialists do want to enjoy the fruits of their hedonistic teaching in all security. But how can they have any security? By the denial of all absolute values, they contradict their own teaching and even their own existence. There is no sign of reason of them.<sup>57</sup>

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(na hi dharmādisiddhiḥ). Here Madhva seems to argue to the eternity and 'non-personal' nature of 'śruti' not merely from the fact of the super-sensible nature of 'dharma' but also from its eternal, universal and obligatory character. *Dharma* and *adharma* are accepted by all. Since personal testimony is always subject to error, doubt and other defects, the absolute certitude on the subject of morality cannot be founded on such a source. Hence 'śruti' must be 'apauruṣeya.' Cf. also AV. III. 3. 139.

54. *ibid.* nos. 7, 8.

55. *ibid.* no. 10. The whole point is explained by Jayatīrtha in VTV. Tī pp. 13-14. Cf. also AV. I. 1.71.

56. Cf. VTV. no. 7 AV. III. 3. 130-53.

57. VTV. 7-10; AV. III. 3.130,53.

We may however ask, whether the knowledg of *dharma* and *adharma* and the knowledge of the final fruit of a dharmic life necessarily call for the non-personal character of the Vedas'.

It is such an objection that Madhva tries to meet by stating that *dharma* and *adharma* cannot be known by means of personal testimony, because persons are liable to ignorance and deceptiveness.<sup>58</sup> Jayatīrtha informs us that Madhva is here pointing out that the testimony of the Buddha, Kapila etc., cannot establish with certainty *dharma* and *adharma*, since they have such defects as ignorance and deceptiveness.<sup>59</sup> The absolutely certain knowledge of *dharma* and *adharma* calls for an absolutely certain source of knowledge. Such a source can only be a non-personal testimony.

Madhva seems to imply that the moral law, that rules the world and our own destiny cannot possess eternal and unconditional validity, if it were to be made a temporal decree even of God. The moral law is absolutely and universally binding As a matter of fact, we know the various facets of moral law from the vedic prescriptions. Neither *pratyakṣa*, external or internal, nor our trust in the perception of Yogins, nor inference, can offer the knowledge of *dharma*, precisely because it is 'supra-sensible.' At the same time, Madhva seems to be conscious that '*dharma*' not merely pertains to the domain of *Śruti*, but also to the consciousness of all men. The universal moral consciousness cannot be founded on individual insights or on certain particular individuals. As far as the Dvaitins are concerned, such universality necessarily demands an absolute and universal source of dharmic knowledge,

But then, if we should accept that the Vedas are the testimony of an omniscient being, say, God, or of his Avatāras

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58. VTV. no. 11.

59. VTV Tī p. 24 *vītarāgiṇam api jñānāṅkurasamprakṣa-  
nārthaṁ chalādinā prativādiratāraṇasya sarvair  
aṅgikṛtatvāt.*

(e.g., the Buddha) then we can eliminate the possibility of ignorance and deceptiveness.

To this serious objection Madhva has this answer : "It is not right to postulate omniscient beings. Omniscience is not a matter of experience and hence how can we legitimately postulate the existence of such omniscient beings ? Even if we accept that omniscient persons exist, still how do we know that such beings have no intention to deceive others ? Moreover, how do we know that an omniscient and non-deceiving person is the author of the Vedic testimony?"<sup>60</sup> Madhva thinks that any one who asserts that *śruti* is the testimony of an omniscient person is caught in a chain of excessive postulation.<sup>61</sup>

The Buddha, according to Madhva, is an *Avatāra* of Viṣṇu. This means that the Buddha is in all things identical with Viṣṇu.<sup>62</sup> The Buddha therefore, is omniscient and devoid of all evil passions; still he can and does deceive others in order to save true knowledge from the wicked. By simulated actions the Buddha and other *Avatāras* of Viṣṇu, deceive the wicked souls and keep them bound to their false knowledge,<sup>63</sup> lest they, by the study of the true scriptures come to know the truth and thus reach liberation.

This statement of Madhva and Jayatīrtha is very interesting, because it implicitly reveals a specific conception of God and of liberation. Can Viṣṇu himself, therefore, be the final guarantee of truth ? But, can Madhva admit the logical conclusion from his theory without destroying his faith in the absolute supremacy independence and goodness of Viṣṇu ?

60. VTV. no. 12 na ca tadarthatvena sarvajñāḥ kalpyeta anyatrādr̥ṣṭasya sarvajñatvasya kalpanaṁ tasyāvipralambhakatvakalpanaṁ tasya tatkr̥tatvakalpanaṁ ceti kalpanāgaauravaprāpteḥ.

61. VTV. no. 12.

62. Cf. Chapt. II. The Manifestations of Viṣṇu.

63. VTV Ti p. 24.



Another reason why Īśvara or Viṣṇu cannot be the author of śruti is that such an action of God would be devoid of all purpose. God could not have composed the Vedas for his own benefit. But, could he not have composed them for our benefit? Jayatīrtha retorts, How do we come to know of such an intention of Īśvara's? We have no right to imagine such intentions directed to others, for they are very subtle.<sup>64</sup>

Viṣṇu, the omniscient being could not have composed the Vedas as men compose a book; gradual achievement of order and step by step progress to a conclusion. Nor could he

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64. NS Īśvarapravṛtṭeḥ svaprayojanābhāvasya vakṣya-mānatvāt paraprayojanāni tu sūkṣmāny utprekṣitum na vayam sthūladīśmānaḥ prabhavāmaḥ.

AV. I. 1.67 In his AV, Madhva repeats these very arguments in defence of the non-personal character of the Vedas. (AV. 69, 70) Madhva's arguments are more or less repetitions of traditional mīmāṃsā arguments. Thus, the Ślokavārttika holds: "In the case of the Veda, the assertion of freedom from reproach is very easy to put forward, because there is no speaker in this case. The authoritativeness of the Veda lies in the fact that it is authorless."

An omniscient person has never been known by any (ibid. pp. 38-39). There are no reasons for assuming the existence of an omniscient person etc. (ibid. p. 41).

Even this type of argumentation forms part of mīmāṃsā tradition. Dr. F. D' Sa in his book "Śabda-Prāmāṇyam in Śābara and Kumārila explains these points and describes clearly the growth of the mīmāṃsā conception of 'apauruṣeyatvam' (p. 71 ff) Pūrva Mīmāṃsā's arguments for the authority of the Vedas find their classical expression in Mīmāṃsā-ś arguments for the authority of the Vedas find their classical expression in Kumārila. Dr D' Sa devotes part III of his book to his arguments. In fact there is a close similarity between Kumārila's and Madhva's arguments. As regards the establishment of the authority of the Vedas and the interpretation of the vedic texts, the Pūrva and Uttara Mīmāṃsās shared many common points.

compose the Vedas at every age recalling to his mind the prior models destroyed at the time of '*pralaya*'. His omniscience and the actual presence of all reality to his mind, contradict such a view. Nor could Viṣṇu be made a mere reciter of the Vedas at every new Yuga for that will make the Vedas independent of him.

So, Madhva thinks that the Vedas are neither human nor divine compositions. They have no author. The ultimate reason why Madhva has accepted this Mīmāṃsā view on śruti, is to be sought in Madhva's position on the self-validity of knowledge. If the Vedas were personal (human or divine) then their validity would depend on something extrinsic to the Vedas, viz., the authority of the speaker. This will lead us inevitably to the defect of infinite regress.<sup>65</sup>

But Madhva is aware of the fact that the Mīmāṃsā type of "śruti-non-personalism" is incompatible with his belief in the absoluteness of Viṣṇu. The Pūrva-mīmāṃsakas are atheists. For them, the Vedas exist without beginning and end. The Vedas, karma and dharma constitute a sort of substitute Absolute for them. But in the system of Madhva, the non-personal and eternal Vedas can constitute a threat to the supremacy of Viṣṇu. This means that Madhva could not accept without modification the mīmāṃsā view of the non-personalism of śruti. Let us now briefly examine how Madhva

65. VTV. nos 21-23.

Ātreya Rāmānuja, a fourth generation disciple of Rāmānuja in his Nyāyakulīśa gives a number of similar arguments against the existence of omniscient beings. For a short summary: Cf J. K. H. Norton. Theological Presuppositions, in Essays in Philosophy, Ganesh and Co Madras 1962.) Kumārila by attacking the existence of omniscient beings undermines not only the claims of the Buddhists that the Buddha was an omniscient being but also the Nyāya view that the Vedas are from the omniscient Lord. So many of these arguments form part of the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta traditions. ('Cf D' Sa. op. cit. p. 193 ff)

tried to modify the *mīmāṃsā* position in order to make it consonant with his system.

In his *Tattvasamkhyāna*, Madhva writes that the Vedas belong to the group of non-independent, eternal, non-conscious reality.<sup>66</sup> So the Vedas are somehow dependent on Viṣṇu, like all the other realities in this world. Precisely in what way is śruti dependent on Viṣṇu? A citation from the *Brahm. Pūraṇa*, quoted by Madhva in his VTV, may throw some light on this point: "All the Vedas are eternal and in their eternal form subsist in the mind of Viṣṇu. In each creation, they are spoken out by him alone in the self-same form and in the same order, with the same letters and the same mode of utterance and not otherwise. Hence, they are śrutis, i. e., heard by all. They were heard by the sages in previous lives, and, through the grace of Viṣṇu, they manifest themselves to those sages in the present life, in parts and not in their entirety. Since the Vedas were perceived by Hari and were heard by others, they are called '*śrutayaḥ*' by the ancients. The allusions to their origin are to be interpreted in terms of their manifestations. Just as the creation of the individual soul is taken figuratively, the origin of śruti also should be similarly understood."<sup>67</sup>

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66. *Tattvasamkhyāna*

67. VTV. no. 41

Authorship according to Jayatīrtha (N S I. 1.120) means the ordering of words according to one's own will, for the purpose of expressing an object (knowledge) grasped through some other '*pramāṇa*'. Hence authorship is something progressive. In this sense the omniscient Viṣṇu could not have composed the Veda. He eternally intuitively everything. There is no progressive and evolving knowledge in him.

Again N S I. 1.68 states that the Veda is a collection of '*Varṇa*' (syllables) ordered in a specific manner. '*Apauruṣeyatvam*' means that the '*varṇas*' have only one form or order. This order of the '*syllables*' is not preceded by the will of an author acting on his own accord.

Though the passage as it stands is clear and does not call for any comment, still we would like to point out some particular features which distinguish Madhva's teaching from the mīmāṃsaka doctrine. These features at the same time help us to understand better the mādharma doctrine on God.

For the Mīmāṃsakas, the Vedas are eternal and absolute i. e., independent. For Madhva, the Vedas are non-personal but non-independent. The eternity of the Vedas is conceived in different ways by the Mīmāṃsakas and Madhva, because each school has its own concept of time. For the Mīmāṃsakas, time is a beginningless and endless straight line. So the eternity of the Vedas means beginninglessness and endlessness. For the Mādhyas, time is cyclic, and all reality except Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī are subject to this cyclic time with its periodic originations and dissolutions. This implies that the Vedas too become unmanifest during the time of dissolution and are manifested once again in the same form and order in the next 'creation' of the world. Thus, as we speak of the origination and dissolution of the individual soul, so we may speak of the origination of the Vedas too. Like the souls, the Vedas are coexistent with Viṣṇu, and like them, dependent on Viṣṇu too

But the problem is how can the non-intelligent and inert (jaḍa) "varṇas" acquire any order without the intervention of a thinking subject? Are not the 'varṇas' dependent on Viṣṇu? From the texts I have studied, it is doubtful whether Madhva has explicitly and fully dealt with these problems. When Madhva says that the 'Veda' is eternally in the mind of Viṣṇu or that 'Viṣṇu is the eternal seer and object of the Veda' (nityo dṛṣṭā ca vācyaśca bhagavān eva ca svayam) does he mean that 'Viṣṇu willed the order of the syllables? He has not explicitly said it. Since Viṣṇu alone is 'svatantra' and since all order realities depend on him in every respect, we may legitimately conclude that the existence and order of the vedic "varṇas" depend on the will of Viṣṇu. If this interpretation of Madhva's mind is correct, then the mādharma view of 'apauruṣeyatva' excludes only authorship of the type we know from experience. (Cf. Siauve S. Le Doct. de Madhva p. 292 ff.).



Viṣṇu is the cause of their manifestation, and at the time of dissolution they are absorbed into him.

Madhva's statements that the Vedas are always perceived by God (*Viṣṇubuddhigāh*), or that the omniscient God always intuits the syllables and words of the Vedas, should not be taken to mean that the Vedas are in the mind of Viṣṇu, as in the mind of 'a speaker'. Viṣṇu is not the "author" of the Vedas, but the Vedas form the object of the intuition of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu being omniscient and eternal intuits the Vedas eternally and fully.

In a restricted sense though, we may say that Viṣṇu is the speaker of the Vedas. Viṣṇu, at the beginning of each creation gives out or manifests the unmanifest Vedas in the same form and order in which they existed during the previous cycle. Once Viṣṇu has made the Vedas manifest at the beginning of a world cycle, the sages who possess all the required qualities and who are favoured by Viṣṇu intuit the Vedas and they hand down to us these intuited Vedas.<sup>68</sup>

In spite of the non-personal and unchanging character of the Vedas, Madhva can still speak of a 'sort of history of the Vedas'. According to him, during the first golden and *dhārmic* age of the world, the Vedas formed just one whole. But with the passage of time and especially in the second world cycle, the pure Vedic knowledge became distorted; Viṣṇu himself at the request of the gods then descended into this world as *Vyāsa*, restored the Vedas, and divided the one whole Veda into 4 vedas, and these into 24, 101, 1012 etc.

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68. VTV, nos. 19, 20. "If he, who has no less than twenty out of the thirty two merits, who is given to penance, and who knows many Vedas, sees, by the power of his intuitive vision, any text as forming part the Veda, it has to be admitted as such".

The seers are not the authors of the vedic texts. they are however, the seers of and witnesses to the Vedas. "Without them we would not be the possessors of the Saving wisdom.



This division of the Vedas was necessary because man was no more capable of learning the whole of the Veda as one. Hence the vedas as we have them, were arranged and handed down to us by Vyāsa.<sup>69</sup>

### Śruti is Eternal (nitya)

We have often in the above section referred to the eternity of the Vedas. Let us try to examine Madhva's view on this matter. According to Mīmāṃsā and all the Vedānta schools, the Vedas are eternal because the syllable, words and the things meant by them (*artha*) and the meaning-relationships (*śabdārthasambandha*) are eternal.<sup>70</sup> This view is opposed to the *naiyāyika* position which says that the syllables and words are non-eternal and that the word-meaning relationship is to be explained by human or divine convention.<sup>71</sup>

'It cannot be maintained, says Madhva, that *varṇas* originate just when they are pronounced. Such a view would contradict the fact of recognition which says, "this is the same sound which was uttered before," Otherwise the fact of recognition such as 'this is that *Davadatta*' would have to be stigmatised as illusory."<sup>72</sup> What Madhva tries to defend

69. BSBh. I. 1.1; AV I. 1. 1-3; Introduction to Bh. Gī Bh. etc.

70. I am indebted to P. Hacker for explaining to me the meaning of these concepts.

The eternity of words is a fundamental tenet of the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta schools. Cf. Ślokavārttika. pp. 409, 416, 470.

Word-meaning relationship is eternal—373, 349 etc. For a summary of the Advaita position on this point C. K. S. Murthy Gp. Cit. p. 15 ff.

71. For a summary of the Nyāya Views. K. S. Murthy. Op. Cit. p. 226. Cf. N. Su II. 2.18.

72. VTV. no. 29 na ca sādṛśyāt pratyabhijñā bhrāntir iti vācyam so'yam Devadatta ityāder api tathātva-prāpteh The ultimate element of a language is 'Varṇa' (syllable). Each 'varṇa' is eternal, omnipresent and transcendent. The words made of syllables are also

here is not the mere similarity of syllables and hence of words composed of syllables, but their identity. The syllables of the word '*nadī*' e. g., which were uttered by a man 2000 years ago and are uttered by a man today are not just similar, but identically the same, though there are different and passing external "sounds" involved. Even during *pralaya*, the *varṇas* remain identically the same, for they are eternally the object of Viṣṇu's consciousness.<sup>73</sup> Since at the time of dissolution the finite spirits are unmanifest, the vedic *varṇas* do not teach the Supreme Being to any one. But they are in themselves the praises of the Lord.<sup>74</sup> He alone is eternally the "Seer" and the "Content" of the Vedas.<sup>75</sup>

The word *nadī* means 'river', not because of any convention, but because of an eternal connection. Madhva's argument for this assertion is that otherwise river could mean mountain or fire could mean water.

The Vedas composed of syllables, and of words which are combinations of them must be eternal because these are eternal. It is immediately clear that this argument is meaningless because in such a case every testimony must be eternal. How does Madhva answer this difficulty? All know that words haphazardly placed cannot give us any meaning.

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eternal and their relation to the objects denoted by them is natural and essential. But how can each syllable and word, inert as they are, possess by themselves an essential relation to an object? What about their dependence? Madhva's answer seems to be that the "*varṇas*" and their meaning depend on Viṣṇu.

73. *ibid.* no. 41 '*nityā vedās samastās ca śāśvatā viṣṇu-buddhigāḥ sarge sarge*', *munaivaita udgīryante tathaiva ca tatkrameṇaiva tair varṇais tais svarair eva nānyathā*. Cf. also NS. III. 4. 188. Again AV. III. 4. 188 *nityo dṛṣṭā ca vācyaṣca bhagavān eva ca svayaṃ*.

74. Bhg Tat. X. 94.15 *anyadā stutimātro na tu jivānām prayojakāḥ*.

75. A. V. III. 4.188

Without the right order of words we cannot derive any meaning from the words. In ordinary human testimony, we arrange the eternal words in a meaningful manner. What is personal in personal testimony or composition is the rational, meaningful and progressive arrangement of words. When we say that the Vedas are non-personal we not only mean that the words and their meanings are eternal, but also the order of syllables (words) in the Vedas is "non-personal", though the Vedas are eternally dependent on Viṣṇu and are wholly perceived by his thought.<sup>76</sup>

It may not be out of place here to combine the two preceding sections on the non-personal (*apauruṣeya*) and the eternal (*nitya*) character of the Vedas and explain more clearly the implications of these ideas. As far as *Dvaita* is concerned what exists eternally are the *varṇas* in their mutual relations. In fact the *varṇas* are the ultimate and permanent elements of vedic and non-vedic language. They are omnipresent (*vibhu*) substances (*dravya*). Not merely the words but each *varṇa* manifest Viṣṇu. But what above all reveals the unique content of *Śruti*, Viṣṇu, is the order of syllable and words. The content of *Śruti* always remains the same. So the *varṇas* and the order of the Vedas too remain the same. Viṣṇu manifests the ordered Vedas to the world so that the devotees might come to know him. The *varṇas* however, are inert, non-conscious (*jaḍa*) realities. Only through the intervention of thought or intelligence can they become meaningful language. So also the order of *varṇas* and words pertain to the sphere of intelligence. In this sense the "meanings" of *varṇa* words and the order of the vedic words are eternally thought by Viṣṇu; they are manifested in time by his will and are sustained by him.<sup>77</sup>

76. VTV. 41; AV. III. 4.188

77. *ibid.* In short we can say that without the thought of Viṣṇu, there would be no vedic words, no harmony and order of vedic words, no vedic truth.

## Śruti is Self-Valid

In the first chapter we have already touched upon Madhva's epistemological doctrine of the self-validity of knowledge. All true knowledge is self-valid and carries within it the certitude of its validity. The self-validity of *śruti* is no more than an application to it of this general epistemological principle.

The validity of testimony in general is the necessary condition on which Madhva builds the theory of the self-validity of the Vedas. Against those who wanted to reduce language or testimony to inference, Madhva argues that verbal testimony can never be reduced, either to immediate sense perception or to inference. *Pratyakṣa* is the immediate knowledge of an object through sense-object contact. *Anumāna* on the other hand is a mediate knowledge, whose basis is the knowledge of 'vyāpti' i. e., the invariable concomitance of the *probandum* and the *probans*. The essential nature of verbal testimony is different from that of these two sources of knowledge. Verbal testimony gives us a mediate knowledge i. e., through the medium of the knowledge of words (uttered by a reliable person), we come to know something. Hence it is clear that verbal testimony is irreducible to either *pratyakṣa* or *anumāna*. It must be accepted as a third means or source of knowledge.<sup>78</sup>

*Śabda* like *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna* is an *anupramāṇa*. The only *kevala pramāṇa*, the immediately self-valid and self-validating source of knowledge is the *sākṣin* (internal-witness or the knowing self). So the cognitions derived from the *anupramāṇas* become evident and are validated by the "knowing Self." As Madhva puts it : "It is by the perception of *sākṣin* that the truth of the *pramāṇas* is recognized. Since the

78. On the problem of the self-validity of *śruti* : Śloka-vārttika pp. 26, 35, 46 etc. Verbal testimony is irreducible to perception or inference. Cf. Ślokavārttika pp. 209, 214; A. V. III. 2. 193, 197 AV. I. 1.68; Ślokavārttikā. p. 86.



*sākṣin* is self-luminous, there is no defect of infinite regress"<sup>79</sup>. So the truth of the Vedas is also then ultimately guaranteed by the *sākṣin*. As it has already been said, the universal and necessary laws of *dharma* are revealed to us by the non-personal Vedas. At the same time the *Dvaitins* are convinced that all men have the consciousness of the exigencies of the moral order. It also perceives the universal, eternal and necessary content of *dharma* revealed in the Vedas and its accord with the moral exigencies experienced by all. In fact only the *sākṣin* is capable of grasping the notions of totality, universality and absolute necessity. In this sense the *āgama-pramāṇa* (*Śruti* as a source of knowledge) resembles *pratyakṣa*. This is the reason why Madhva says : "The authority of *āgama* is intrinsic to itself, being similar to that of perception."<sup>80</sup>

*Śruti* is a part or type of verbal testimony with the two characteristics mentioned above : eternity and non-personalism. At this stage a further question may be asked whether *Śruti* as a source of knowledge has a proper object of its own.

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79. VTV. no. 33 tatprāmāṇyaṃ ca svata eva siddham AV. I. 1.66 pratyakṣavac ca prāmāṇyaṃ svata evāgama-sya hi. Accepting the position 'śruti' is self valid, we may ask how we come to know that validity. Āgama is an 'anupramāṇa' and the validity of an 'anupramāṇa' according to the general 'sākṣi-doctrine' of Madhva, is manifested to us by the 'sākṣin' (AV, III. 2.54 ff). This means that the intrinsic validity of the 'veda' is intuitively known to the 'sākṣin'. This happens in as much as 'dharma', the content of 'śruti' is seen by the 'sākṣin' as in accord with its own inner moral exigency. (Cf. La Doct de Madhva pp. 245-248). Thus vedic teaching is seen as something which is in immediate accord with the exigency of the spiritual subject. Though the texts of Madhva taken in themselves do not state explicitly the above doctrine; still the whole thrust of his thinking seems to warrant the interpretation of Mle. Siauue.

80. AV. I. 1.66



Every source of knowledge must have its proper object. Madhva and Jayatīrtha agree with the Mīmāṃsakas in saying that the Vedas have a proper and specific object of their own, viz., *dharma* (and all the superasensible realities).<sup>81</sup> *Dharma* can be known only through *śruti*. In ordinary human testimony, the aptitude and truthfulness and other conditions affecting the speaker, the matter communicated, and the speech itself must necessarily be taken into consideration, in order to be certain of the validity of the testimony. In the case of *śruti*, nothing extrinsic to it has to be taken into consideration in order to establish its validity. *Śruti* is non-personal, the syllables-words, their meanings and their innate power to signify something, are eternal. So *śruti* is valid in itself. Its authority and validity are connatural to it.<sup>82</sup>

**Smṛti** (Tradition)

Unlike *śruti*, *smṛti* is personal and eternal-non-eternal (*nityānityā*) *Smṛti* is valid in as much as it is in agreement with *śruti*. As a *Brah. Pūraṇa* text says : "the *purāṇas* which agree with the Vedas in content, are brought forth in each creation in new forms. Therefore, they are not eternal. Their import however, is what it was in the previous epochs. The *Pūraṇas* are non-eternal only because of the variations in verbal composition."<sup>83</sup>

The word-order and form of *śruti* are eternal and non-personal. The word-order and form of the *Purāṇas*, change from one creation to another. So, they are in this sense, non-eternal and personal. But their purport which is none other than the purport of *śruti*, remain unchanged all through the various epochs. In this sense they are eternal. It is their accord with the *śruti*, which ultimately makes them authoritative.

81. A. V. I. 1.68 Cf. Jayatīrthā comments on this verse.

82. Siauxe S. La Doct de Madhva IIIrd Part Chapt. I.

83. VTV. nos. 41, 48.

### Interpretation of the Sacred Texts

*Śruti* which is eternal, non-personal and self-valid and the *Pūraṇas* and other *smṛti* works need serious study in order to be understood. The exegesis of the sacred texts calls for the right knowledge of the principles of interpretation. Moreover, the Vedas should be studied under the guidance of a teacher well versed in them.<sup>84</sup> Only the three higher castes may study the Vedas; the *Śūdras* and women must be satisfied with the study of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*.<sup>85</sup>

What is more important for us here, are Madhva's views on *śruti*-exegesis. How can one reach the superasensible truths taught in the *śruti*? The canons of interpretation which Madhva gives in his writings for the right understanding of *Śruti* are taken from the *Mīmāṃsakas*.<sup>86</sup> Madhva himself has not said much on this subject in his various writings.

In order to understand correctly the purport of the texts, one has to take into consideration the following points: The beginning and conclusion of a given text, repetition, peculiarity, the objective or fruit laid down, statements about things and corroborative reasoning.<sup>87</sup>

As Jayatīrtha and Trivikrama explain, while studying a text one should see whether what is said at the beginning of a text is in accord with what is said at the end. The repetition

84. BSBh. III. 3.51. Cf. also III. 3.44-46.

85. Bh. Gī. Bh. Introduction; On the *Śūdras*. Vide. BSBh. I. 3.36, 38.

86. On the principles of interpretation. Vide *Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra* III. 3. 14 *śruti-līṅga-vākya-prakaraṇa-sthāna-samākhyānām-samvāye pāraḍaurbalyam arthaviprakarṣāt*. Cf. also L. Renou, *The Destiny of the Veda in India*, p. 43 ff and p. 45. For further details Cf. G. Jha *The Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā in its Sources*, p. 279ff. The way, Advaita Vedānta makes use of these principles is briefly explained by K. S. Mūṛthy Op. Cit. p. 80ff.

87. BSBh. I. 1.4 *upakramopasaṃhārāv abhyāso pūrvatā phalam arthavādupattī ca līṅgam tātparyanirnaya iti* For details Cf. Tat. Di. pp. 37-38. Tat. pr. I.1.4

of an idea in the text shows that that idea is the central teaching of the text. One must also examine, whether the matter taught in the text is known from other sources of knowledge. Real *śruti* teaching deals with suprasensible realities alone. If in matters which can be known either from sense-knowledge or true inference *śruti* seems to offer a teaching which is at variance with the known facts, then we have to interpret the *śruti* text in accordance with the known facts. *Arthavāda* or statements about existing things are also of importance. A student of *śruti* must note whether the '*arthavādas*' extol or condemn the principal idea of the text. If the *arthavādas* always extol the greatness of Viṣṇu, then it is a clear indication that Viṣṇu is the principal purport of the Vedas. Finally corroborative reasoning is used in a text to establish the truth of the matter discussed.

Other norms too should be taken into account while studying the sacred texts.<sup>88</sup> They are : *śruti* (direct statement), *liṅga* (the actual or conventional meaning of a word as distinct from its etymological meaning), *vākya* (the syntactical connection of words which gives meaning to a group of words), *prakaraṇa* (the context or the mutual expectancy), *sthāna* (the position of the text concerned) and *samākhya* (appellation through a name).

Madhva does not explain these norms. Perhaps he takes for granted that all the students of *śruti* are familiar with the *mīmāṃsā* teaching on this subject.

There are some general principles which should be kept in mind in *śruti* exegesis. When the primary meaning of words gives a fitting sense to a text, one has no right to accept the secondary sense of words as the real meaning. Secondly, if we find mutually opposing statements in *śruti*, then that meaning should be accepted which is more fitting on the strength of the collective evidence of the various texts and of accurate direct perception. Thirdly, when faced with obscure

passages we should try to look for clearer statements on the same topic elsewhere in the text.<sup>89</sup>

Though Madhva accepts these and other principles of textual exegesis and though he affirms that if one follows faithfully the given norms, one will infallibly discover the dualistic and realistic Vaiṣṇavism in the sacred texts, still we must admit that the fundamental exegetic principle of Madhva is derived from his faith in Viṣṇu. This fundamental principle on which Madhva bases his whole interpretation is that syllables and words primarily signify Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is the primary content of each word.<sup>90</sup> In course of time the primary sense of many words might have been forgotten and the secondary sense might have become in our consciousness the primary meaning.<sup>91</sup> But 'real *fruti*-interpretation' is the rediscovery of the forgotten primary meaning. 'Viṣṇu is declared by means of all the metres, of all the gods, of all the worlds, and of all other things. They bear their names only because of the presence of Viṣṇu in them.'<sup>92</sup> 'Visnu is declared by all the names of different things, for the reason that he rules all. There is no name whatever which means a thing without declaring the supreme Lord.'<sup>93</sup> The words which denote

89. VIV. no. 95 Repetition is a clue to the purport of a passage. BHBh. I. 1.6 na ca mukhyaṃ yujyate ibid. II. 1.18: paraspavirodhe tu vākyānāṃ yatra yuktatā tathāivārthaḥ parijñeyo nāvākya yuktiḥ.

90. BSBh. I.30. "There is no word whatever which names a thing without declaring the Lord".

AV. I. 1.9 yam nāmāni viśantyaddhā yo devānām iti hy api śruter nāmāni sarvāṇi viṣṇor eva yatas tataḥ ibid. 91 atho na mukhyato nāma tadanyasya hi kasyacit.

91. BSBh. I. 4. 16 : paramātmavācinah sabdānyatra samākṛṣya vyavahriyante ibid. I. 4.17: Men generally think and talk of the world, and not of the Lord. So the words are known to pertain to the world (to the things in the world).

92. BSBh. I. 4.1 ff.

93. ibid. I. 1. 30; Also I. 4.18.

Viṣṇu, are taken from him and used to denote other things. The words which designate Viṣṇu are taken up for use in the world to speak of other things. Since men think and talk of the world generally and not of the Lord, the words have been known as pertaining to the world. 'Viṣṇu has conferred his names on all beings, just as a king confers gifts on his vassals.'<sup>94</sup> In these citations, we have the primary principle of Madhva with which he interprets the Sacred Texts.

From the primary principle we can derive a secondary principle which is nothing but a corollary of the first. All the Vedic statements deal with Viṣṇu. The beginning, the middle and the end of all *śruti* and *smṛti* deal with Viṣṇu.<sup>95</sup> The two theological principles are the guiding lights of Madhva's textual interpretation.

### The Unity of the Sacred Texts.

Here we touch upon one of the most intricate problems of Hindu thought, namely, the unity of the Sacred Texts. Any balanced and adequate treatment of this problem would call for a whole book. Our purpose in dealing with this topic here is very limited. How did Madhva try to defend the unity of *śruti* literature? Does Madhva's view on the unity of *śruti* throw any light on the nature of Viṣṇu?

According to the Mimāṃsakas, only the injunctive part of the Veda (*vidhis*) i. e., only that part of the Veda which deals with rituals has authority and validity. This statement is the logical result of their fundamental assertion that the Vedas teach only *dharma*. *Dharma* is something which must be accomplished and not something which exists by itself apart from the action. Therefore, only the injunctions which enjoin upon man the accomplishment of *dharma*, are valid.

94. *ibid.* I. 3.3 *rte nārāyaṇādīnī nāmāni puruṣottamaḥ prādād anyatra bhagavān rājevarte svakaṁ puram iti.*

95. Bh. Gi. Bh. II. 45 *Vede rāmāyaṇe caiva purāṇe bhārata tathāādāvante ca madhye ca Viṣṇuḥ sarvatra gīyate.* Cf. also BSBh. III. 3. 4, 5.



The other parts of *Śruti*, which deal with knowledge etc., are valid only secondarily and in relation to the injunctive part. In other words, the Mimāṃsakas say that the whole of *śruti* literature is divided into two parts : *karmakāṇḍa* and *jñānakāṇḍa*. Only *karmakāṇḍa* which enjoins ritual, social and moral actions and imposes prohibitions is authoritative, purely and simply. The *jñānakāṇḍa* which teaches metaphysics and meditation is only relatively authoritative.<sup>96</sup>

96. "In fact, Mimāṃsā takes care not to treat the Veda as an indistinct whole or as an aggregate of equipollent parts. It deals with the *Śruti*; the Vedic elements of the *Smṛti* have a secondary authority, like the rest of *Smṛti*. There remains, therefore, the mantras and the *brāhmaṇas* (the *Upaniṣads* being irrelevant). But Mimāṃsā whose purpose is to systematise the injunctions and classify the acts, bears primarily on the *Brāhmaṇas* more precisely on the injunctive parts of *Brāhmaṇas*. Whatever is not injunctive, but simply declarative, whether or not it is qualifying, is only the Veda of the second zone. This includes also certain sections of the *brāhmaṇa* (called the *arthavādas*)—in fact, they are numerically dominant as well as the totality of the mantras. even those, which from our point of view embody an injunction, (L. Renou. Op. Cit. p. 41) For more details - Cf. K. S. Murthy, Op. Cit. p. 212 ff. The Mimāṃsā doctrine on *śruti* is based on a particular theory of language. This school believes that language is not primarily meant to describe or explain facts or existing realities, but to guide human conduct through the indication of actions and prohibitions. Action (verb) is the centre of a phrase or sentence and only in relation to this central element the rest of the phrase or sentence becomes meaningful.

This general theory of language is unacceptable to Madhva. He shows the falsity of the mimāṃsā view by the analysis of the way children learn a language ( VTV. 53; A. V. I. 1.48 SS etc. ) Even adults come to know things not through injunctions. (VTV. 56) Again a man enters on an action only when the end of the action is known as good for him and accessible to him. Before language has an injunctive function, it has descriptive and explanatory

The Monists, who hold that *śruti* teaches the attributeless and self-effulgent Brahman and the identity of the individual self with this Absolute Brahman, assert that only the *jñānakāṇḍa* of *śruti* is authoritative from the absolute point of view. Even in the *jñānakāṇḍa* of *śruti*, it is virtually only the so called great sentences (*māhāvākyas*) which are supposed to contain the fullness of authority because they teach (a) the identity of the individual self with Brahman, and (b) the non-qualified Supreme Being. The Monists subordinate the *karmakāṇḍa* to the *jñānakāṇḍa* and they think that all non-monistic statements in *śruti* are just concessions to the ignorant who cannot rise to the knowledge of the attributeless Brahman and of the *jīva-Brahman* identity.<sup>97</sup> Such texts deal with *saguṇa-Brahman*.

Madhva rejects both these extreme views. For him, the whole of *śruti* literature and in a subordinate way the *smṛti* literature too form just one whole. The unity of the sacred texts does not come from the unity of authorship or of style, but from the unity of the central theme which is dealt with in them, viz., *Vṛṣṇu*.<sup>98</sup> Though the Vedas teach *dharma* and

functions. The objective of the action must be made known as goop. Like all the *pramāṇas*, *śabda* is valid only when it manifests an objective reality. Such being the case, the Dvaitins think that the very foundation of the *mīmāṃsā* theory is wrong.

97. On the Advaita and Viśiṣṭadvaita views on the 'unity' and authority of the Vedas. Cf. L. Renou. Op. cit. pp. 35-40.

98. "In short, Madhva rejects the idea of limiting the Veda to *karmakāṇḍa*; the two *kāṇḍas* should be put on the same plane, or rather their differences should be abolished, transferring to the general interpretation of the Veda, the principle of 'ekavākyatā' that *Mīmāṃsā* had set up for the specific cases... Madhva and his successors utilise to the full, the resources of the *Mīmāṃsā* and going beyond *Mīmāṃsist* reasoning, flatter themselves that they have rediscovered the broad outlines of a theist Vedānta, integrating the deed into a superior whole, which in fact aboli-

other suprasensible realities still the central theme (*mahātātparya*) of the sacred texts is Viṣṇu and his greatness. Madhva would admit that there are primary and secondary statements in *śruti*. The primary statements are those which teach dualism. All other statements should, therefore, be interpreted in relation to the primary dualistic statements. But since Viṣṇu is the central purport of all the statements, Madhva can reject the division of *śruti* into *karmakāṇḍa* and *jñānakāṇḍa*.

Moreover, to deny the unity of the Vedas is to destroy its authority. If a person were to question the authority of some texts, then what would prevent him from questioning the validity of the whole? "It is the Vedas that are wholly without author and endowed with intrinsic validity; if one of its parts is not true, then neither can the other be true. If one part is true, then how could the other be but true."<sup>99</sup> As mentioned above, the unity of the Vedas is based on the fact that they teach one Supreme Reality. In fact, the Vedas are the perfect testimony. (*Śāba pramāṇa*). Hence the criteria of valid testimony are applicable to them too. *Ākāṃkṣā* : the expectation that sustains the unity of meaning till its completion; *Sannidhi* : the contiguity of words that unites them into a single statement; *Togyatā* : the mutual accord of the words, all these are found in their perfection in the Vedas. *Ākāṃkṣā* when applied to the Vedas implies *jijñāsā* desire to know, not merely the content or meaning of a

shes its autonomy in the name of raising it. Since then, the Veda has had no more than one meaning, namely, to indicate the ultimate aim of all activity, as of all knowledge, that is to say, God, (L. Renou, Op. Cit. p. 40). VTV. nos. 100-103.

AV. I. 1.1-1 mukhyārtho bhagavān Viṣṇuh sarvaśāst-rasya nāparah

VTV. no. 437. All the Vedas reveal Viṣṇu as their direct signification.

AV. I.1.58 Madhva applies 'ekavākyatā' to the Vedas.

sentence or phrase but the reality expressed by all the Vedic words and sentences. The contiguity of words here stands for the omnipresence of the unique content of *śruti* in all vedic words. Finally *Yogyatā* is not simply the mutual accord of words, but the unity of truth manifested in the Vedas and uncontradicted by any *pramāṇa*. So no one can accept without contradiction the validity of only certain parts of the Vedas.

The Vedāntic tradition accepts the Vedās as a *pramāṇa*, i. e., the perfect means to know truth. Under this condition how can the Advaitins introduce into the very *pramāṇa* a division or two levels of truth? The Advaitins contend that the inferior knowledge (*aprā-vidyā*) would be removed when the Superior knowledge (*parā-vidyā*) dawns on man. Yet, they illogically admit the self-validity (*svataḥ prāmāṇya*) of truth. If truth is self-valid, how can one distinguish between levels of truth? "To say that the true knowledge of Brahman is the experience of (one's) identity with Brahman is mere prattle acceptable only to a few (Advaitins)"<sup>100</sup> Such statements are not based on the principle of the self-validity of truth.

### III

#### Viṣṇu, The Primary Content of the Vedas.

##### A Difficult Problem :

Madhva affirms that Viṣṇu is the central theme of all the sacred texts, especially of *śruti*. But how can Viṣṇu be the central theme of *śruti*, which by definition is non-personal i. e., not composed by Viṣṇu or by one of his Avatāras? It is true that Viṣṇu perceives *śruti*. But he does not perceive it as an author perceives his book. In other words, Viṣṇu does not conceive it. Of course, Madhva says that *śruti* is eternally dependent on Viṣṇu. But how can this dependence explain the idea of Viṣṇu being the theme of the Vedas? The Vedas themselves being non-conscious could not so arrange themselves as to denote Viṣṇu in every one of their statements.



Madhva was aware of at least some of these problems. In his commentary on the BhGī (chap II) Madhva and his commentator Jayatīrtha ask the question : how the Vedas can have Viṣṇu as their centre (*vāsudevaparā vedāḥ*). First of all, the Vedas being non-conscious cannot act like a conscious being for the sake of an end.<sup>101</sup> Secondly, the Vedas are beginningless and so, how can Viṣṇu have any influence on them?<sup>102</sup> The answer to this objection is : the Vedas can have Viṣṇu as their central theme because of Viṣṇu's own ordinance (*īśvaranīyamāt*).<sup>103</sup> Viṣṇu can authoritatively direct the Vedas because of his independent and incomprehensible power (*ananyāpekṣācintyaśaktitvāt*).<sup>104</sup> But neither Madhva nor his commentator tells us, what this authoritative direction of the Vedas by Viṣṇu does mean.

The Mīmāṃsakas could speak of non-personal *śruti* because they were atheists. But in a theism like that of Madhva, the idea of a non-personal *śruti* makes no sense. Madhva tries hard to overcome the inner contradiction contained in these two opposing doctrines, i. e., the absolute independence and supremacy of Viṣṇu on the one side and the non-personalism of *śruti* on the other. But his attempt leads him into many difficulties. First of all he says that the Vedas are dependent on Viṣṇu; but that this dependence does not mean that Viṣṇu is the author of the Vedas. But then how could the eternal and non-conscious Vedas come to purport Viṣṇu? Madhva answers : because of their authoritative direction by Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu can direct the Vedas because he has independent and absolute power. But can authoritative direction of texts or testimony be absolutely distinguished from authorship in its fundamental sense? If this is so, then can we any more speak of a non-personal *śruti*? Statements are not wanting in which Madhva indicates that Viṣṇu him-

101. Jayatīrtha on Madhva's Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 24 (p. 142).

102. *ibid.* p. 142.

103. Bh. Gī Bh. II. 24 na caitad viruddham īśvaranīyamāt anādau ca tat siddham 'dravyam karma ca kālas ca....

104. Jayatīrtha's Prameya Dīpikā on Bh. Gī Bh. II. 24



self has sung some of the hymns.<sup>105</sup> Moreover the mādхва doctrine that all realities except Viṣṇu depend on him for their reality (*sattā*) activity (*pravṛtti*) and knowledge (*pramiti*) makes it abundantly clear that the Vedic *varṇas* and order, in short the totality of the Vedas entirely depend on the Lord. Ultimately, it is this dependence that explains the fact that Viṣṇu is the unique content of *śruti*. In this sense, Viṣṇu is not the mere "Seer" of the Vedas, but the eternal and independent source of the *śruti* texts.

### Brahman = Viṣṇu

Let us now pass on to a brief exposition of the method or rather the manner in which Madhva substantiates his affirmation that Viṣṇu is the central teaching of *śruti* and *smṛti*.

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105. AV. III. 4.188 says : "There is no knowledge without a knowing subject and a known object; nor is there any enjoyment without a subject and an object of enjoyment. In the same way there is no word without a speaker and an object expressed.... The eternal seer and speaker of the eternal word ( *vaktā* ) and the object of the word are the same : the Lord. The word Gāyatrī is composed of 'gāna ( singing, chanting) and trāṇa (protection). Viṣṇu is the singer of the hymns, in the sense that he makes known their signification and he protects the students of the Vedas from sin ( *pāpa* ). ( Text cited by S. Siauve. *Les Noms Vediques*. p. 94 ).

BSBh. I. 1.25 *gāyatrī* = *gāyati*, *trāyati*. Here Viṣṇu is said to be the singer of the hymns. But as Jayatīrtha has explained it above, Viṣṇu only makes known the signification of the hymns.

ibid. I. 4.10 "The elements, function ( *ceṣṭā* ) the 'mantras' ( Vedic hymns ) etc. came forth from the principal breath ( *mukhyapṛāṇa* ) and the principal breath is from the Lord". All these texts can be interpreted in the 'non-personal' sense. In the works of Madhva, we do not come across a fully clear statement, which ascribes the authorship of the Vedas to Viṣṇu.

All scholars agree that Viṣṇu in the Vedic literature was only a god of the second magnitude.<sup>106</sup> In the post-upaniṣadic literature and especially in the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Purāṇas* his importance grew steadily. Viṣṇu became for many the *Īśvara*, the maker and Lord of the whole universe. The identification of Viṣṇu with the Kṛṣṇa of the Kṛṣṇa sect and the development of the idea of *avatāra* contributed to enhancing the position of Viṣṇu.<sup>107</sup> The Vaiṣṇava faith which Madhva inherited from tradition had already a very definite idea, a clear cut picture of Viṣṇu.<sup>108</sup> In spite of different nuances in their conception of Viṣṇu, all the Vaiṣṇavas were agreed on the doctrine that Viṣṇu was the producer, sustainer and destroyer of the universe; that Viṣṇu was endowed with all auspicious attributes; that he was the liberator of his devotees etc. Viṣṇu was also called by other names such as Hari, Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, and so on. His consort is Lakṣmī and he rests on the primeval waters. His bed is the thousand-headed serpent *Śeṣa*. According to the Ṛg Veda, Viṣṇu is the one, who traverses the three worlds in three strides.<sup>109</sup> In the BhGī, God's saving function in his *Avatāras* and man's need to be devoted to him were very clearly set down.<sup>110</sup> Later, the Vaiṣṇava *Purāṇas* extolled the glory of Viṣṇu and subordinated all the other gods including Śiva to him.<sup>111</sup> Madhva was the inheritor of such a definite concept of Viṣṇu, the Absolute Being.

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106. On this rather complicated problem. Cf. J. Gonda. *Die Religionen Indiens* I. p. 236 ff: "Viṣṇu und seine Avatāras." Also; Bh. Kumarappa. *The Hindu Conception of the Deity* p. 86 ff.

107. J. Gonda *Op. Cit.* p. 237 ff.

108. Bh. Kumarappa. *op. cit.* Chapters; *Conception of Deity in Bhagavadgītā*; *Conception of Deity in Pāñcarātra and purāṇic literature.*

109. Ṛg. V. VI. 49. 13; VII. 100.4

110. Bh. Gī. IV. 7, 8; V. 29; XI. 41, 44 etc.

111. P. Hacker *Prahlāda ....* Vol. I. pp. 80-88; 128-135  
Viṣṇu und Śiva, *ibid.* vol. II. p. 183 ff.

Like Yāmuna and Rāmānuja before him, Madhva tries to establish by means of textual exegesis that the Viṣṇu of his Vaiṣṇava tradition is the Brahman, the Absolute Being of the Upaniṣads. Rāmānuja for example was satisfied with the interpretation of the Upaniṣads that Viṣṇu was the theme of all śruti.<sup>112</sup> Madhva, however, goes further to the Ṛg Veda Saṁhita itself and endeavours to show that Viṣṇu is the one whose glory is sung in all the Vedic hymns. Applying his principle that every word primarily signifies Viṣṇu, Madhva interprets names like Indra, Prajāpati etc., to mean Viṣṇu. His position that at the beginning of creation there existed perfect knowledge of Viṣṇu and that in course of time this pure knowledge of Viṣṇu became contaminated, leads him to make Viṣṇu the centre of the whole of sacred literature.

We shall illustrate Madhva's exegetical method by means of a couple of examples. "What is the goal of this world? (*asya lokasya kāgatiḥ?*) He replied; Space, for all these creatures are produced from space. They go back to space. For space is greater than these. Space is the final goal." "This is the *udgīthā*, highest and best. This is endless. He who, knowing this, meditates on *udgīthā*, the highest and best, becomes the highest and best and obtains the highest and best worlds" (Ch. Up. I.9. 1-2)<sup>113</sup>. Let us now analyse Madhva's comments on these two verses. In verses 1 there occurs the question 'what is the goal of this world (*gati*)?' Madhva, as interpreted by Trivikrama, takes this '*gati*' to mean support (*āśraya*) and so he understands the question as : who is the

112. Rāmānuja's 'Vedārthasaṁgraha' illustrates well his exegetical method and the use of the Upaniṣads to prove his point.

113. BSBh. I. 1.21 *asya lokasya kā gatiḥ ity ākāśa iti hovācety atra bhūtākāśasya prāptiḥ na cāsau yujyate, kimtū Viṣṇur eva gatiḥ āśraye.*

Tat. Dī. p. 70 *asya lokasya kā gatiḥ ity ākāśa iti hovāca tatrasaṁśayaḥ, him ayam ākāśaśabdo bhūtākāśaviśayaḥ, kim vā Viṣṇuviśaya iti.*

support of the world? The Upaniṣad answers : it is *ākāśa* (ether) (space). Now, Madhva thinks that the word 'ether' (space, which is conceived as subtle matter) cannot here mean the element ether, because verse 2 in the Upaniṣad declares *ākāśa* (ether) to be the most excellent *Udgītha*. The word *Udgītha* occurring in the text refers perhaps to a vedic hymn. But Madhva understands it (according to Trivikrama), as loudly proclaimed by the Vedas.<sup>114</sup> Madhva tells us that Viṣṇu is the most excellent, he is the one loudly proclaimed by the Vedas; he is limitless. So the ether, of which the Upaniṣad speaks cannot but be Viṣṇu, because the attributes of Viṣṇu are predicated of that ether,<sup>115</sup> But can, we so easily connect Viṣṇu with space or ether? Was there not an upaniṣadic view that considered ether to be more vast and limitless than sound, breath, food, water, the yonder world and this world? Did not some sages think that ether was the ground of this world? In order to justify his interpretation that the ether or space spoken of in the text, is Viṣṇu, Madhva takes a Ṛg Vedic hymn which speaks of Viṣṇu as related to space : "You, who grow beyond measure in body, your measure, no body reaches; we know your two steps." (VII. 99). Here the verse alludes to Viṣṇu's mighty steps, two of which covered the whole earth and the skies. The hymn does not say that Viṣṇu is space. But for Madhava the above mentioned relation of Viṣṇu to space (the two, sometime three strides of Viṣṇu) is enough to justify him in taking the space spoken of in the Upaniṣad to mean Viṣṇu. Finally, Madhva quotes *Brahmā. Purāṇa* which says that Viṣṇu alone is unlimited and glorious. So, no elemental ether is in question here. Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu alone is meant by the word (*ākāśa* or Space)<sup>116</sup>.

114. Tat. Dī p. 70 uccatvena gīyat ity udgīthaḥ..

115. BSBh. I. 1.22 sa eṣa paro varīyān udgīthaḥ sa eṣo' nanta ityādi tallingāt.

116. BSBh. I. 1.22.

ibid. ananto bhagavān Brahmānandetyādibhiḥ padaiḥ procyate Viṣṇur evaikaḥ.

Using the same method, Madhva interprets the other texts too.<sup>117</sup> Let us take another example from the Kāth. Up. Bh. of Madhva.<sup>118</sup> The text commented on reads thus : "He is not born, nor does he die, the wise ( self ); he is not derived from any, nor does he become anyone. Unborn, eternal, everlasting, this ancient one is not slain when the body is slain".

"If the slayer thinks to slay, if the slain thinks he is slain, both these understand not; he slays not, nor is slain."

"Finer than the fine, greater than the great, the self is set down in the secret part of this living being. One who abstains from ritual acts is (*akratu*) rid of sorrow, beholds the greatness of the Self by the grace of the Creator." (Kāth. Up. I. 2. 18-20).<sup>119</sup>

In spite of all the difficulties in understanding the verses, a couple of points at least are clear. First of all every impartial student will admit that the 'self' (*ātman*) is the only subject in verse 18. Madhva, however, in his commentary interprets the word '*ātman*' in three different senses. First of all, he takes it to mean Viṣṇu (*bhagavān*), then he interprets it

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Tat. Dī. p. 70. The statement that "all beings originate from *ākāśa* and return to *ākāśa*" clearly shows that Viṣṇu is meant by the word "*ākāśa*"

117. For further examples of Madhva's interpretation of texts : Cf. BSBh. I. 1.23. Breath (Tait. A. III. 14.4) signifies only Viṣṇu, because such attributes as supreme bliss are predicated of it.

ibid. I. 1.24 Light (*Jyotis*) in Muṇḍ. U. II. 2.10 stands for Viṣṇu. ibid. I. 1.25 *gāyatrī* (Ch. up. III. 12) means Viṣṇu and not the metre, *gāyatrī*.

118. Kāth. Up. II. 18-20.

119. Transl. F. Edgerton "The Beginnings of Ind. Phil." pp. 184-185,

120. Kāth. up. Bh. II. 18 *ayam bhagavān kuto'pi na babhūva yasmād atas tadvetāpi vipaścīn na mṛiyate ca yataḥ kaścij jivaḥ svato na babhūva ...*



in the sense of a knower of truth( *jñānin* ) and finally he takes the word to mean 'soul' in general.<sup>120</sup> The self which is set down in the secret part of the living being' (v. 20) is according to Madhva, Viṣṇu, because Viṣṇu alone is the indweller in all beings. The word '*akratu*' occurring in the same verse is an attribute of the 'self' and means 'one who abstains from ritual acts', Madhva, however, interprets the word quite differently. He splits the word into 'a' and 'kratu'. 'A' means Viṣṇu and 'kratu' means 'conviction' or 'faith' (*niścaya*) So '*akratu*' means faith in Viṣṇu (*tan-niścaya*).<sup>121</sup>

With the help of these grammatical and linguistic ingenuities, Madhva tries to prove from these verses, the greatness of Viṣṇu, the difference between the individual self and the Supreme Self, the need for true knowledge of and 'faith' in Viṣṇu to reach immortality. By this way of interpreting the texts, or rather by reading the dualistic Vaiṣṇavism into all the texts, Madhva finds Viṣṇu in every sacred text.

Madhva has no difficulty in establishing the identity of Viṣṇu with the Brahman of the Upaniṣads. The word Brahman is derived from the root *bṛh*-to grow. Brahman is that which is great, full, or perfect. Who else other than Viṣṇu is great, full and perfect? Therefore, Madhva, without the least hesitation '*vaiṣṇavizes*' the Upaniṣads. What we find in Madhva is the '*pan-vaiṣṇavization*' of all the *śruti* and *smṛti* texts.<sup>122</sup>

121. *ibid.* II. 20 *evam nityasya jantor guhāyām nihitaḥ, a Viṣṇu kratuḥ yasya so'kratuḥ tanniścayaḥ.*

122. Though it is illegitimate to speak of demythologization in Madhva, yet it is clear that his faith in one absolute personal being enables him to reduce the multiplicity of myths to one central myth: The myth of Viṣṇu. In this myth the deepest aspects of his faith and philosophical insights find expression. At the same time Madhva's insights deepen the myth to make it a more apt vehicle of his thought.

It is, however, to be admitted that the unifying re-interpretation of earlier myths is not something peculiar to Madhva. It is common to all theistic

### Brahman is the Direct Object of the Vedic Words

How is Viṣṇu (Brahman) expressed or attested to in the Vedas? We have already explained that Viṣṇu is knowable and that he is known from and through *fruti*, though no one can fully and exhaustively know him. Now, we must ask the important question, whether the Vedas manifest him only negatively and indirectly or positively and directly.

Madhva's answer to this question presupposes the opposite position of the Advaitins who teach the inexpressibility of Brahman. One of the fundamental assertions of Advaita Vedānta is that Brahman is never the 'object' of any knowledge. As Śaṅkara says in his Ken. Up. Bh. II. 1 : "The knowing principle in the knower cannot be known just as the burning principle in fire cannot be burnt."<sup>123</sup> Brahman, which is identical with our own self, is inaccessible to any of the senses, it is unthinkable. To all beings the Supreme Reality is night.<sup>124</sup> What Śaṅkara wants to teach by these statements is that Brahman cannot be known in the strict sense of the word i. e., as an object (*viśaya*) which stands over against the subject. According to Śaṅkara Brahman is not unknowable because it is the best known of all. It is self-luminous; it is the knower in all knowledge.<sup>125</sup>

But Śaṅkara admits that Brahman is known by means of the Vedas. The Vedas speak of Brahman. But how do they speak of it? Is Brahman the object of the Vedic statements? The Muṇḍ Up I 1.6 says that Brahman is invisible (*adrśya*) ungraspable (*agrāhya*) without family (*agotra*) etc.<sup>126</sup> Hence

schools. What is, however, noteworthy is that faith in an Absolute person whether it be founded on history or it be of a metaphysical-mythical nature, necessarily tends to re-interpret all myths from its standpoint.

123. Śaṅkaras Ken. Up. Bh. II. 1.

124. Śaṅkara's Gī. Bh. 2. 69.

125. *ibid.* 2.18; Ken. Up. Bh. II. 4

126. Ś. Muṇḍ. Up. I. 1.6

Śaṅkara writes in his Gī. Bh 13. 15 : "Being inaccessible to speech Brahman is defined in all Upaniṣads only by a denial of all peculiarities."<sup>127</sup> In the advaita system, all words are derived from the sphere of ordinary life (*vṛvāhāra*) and hence they ultimately belong to the level of ignorance. How then can words really express Brahman? The Br. Ā. Up. (1. 4. 7) says "Brahman should be meditated as the Self" (*ātmeteyevam upāsīta*). Śaṅkara discusses this particle 'iti' (as) in his commentary. According to him the particle 'as' is intended to show that the self (*ātman*) can never be properly denoted by words including the word *ātman* for the 'object' alone can be thought of as denoted by words.<sup>128</sup> Later on (Br. Ā. Up. Bh II 3.6) he says : "Words denote things through name, or form, or action or heterogeneity or species or qualities. Hence Brahman cannot be described in statements like 'it is such or such' as we can describe a cow by saying 'there moves a white cow with horns.' We can indeed describe Brahman in terms such as knowledge, bliss etc by superimposing name, form and action on it. When however, we wish to describe its pure nature, free from all differences due to limiting adjuncts, then we are faced with an utter impossibility. There is only one way left, viz., to describe it as 'not this, not this by eliminating from it all specifications that one may know of.'<sup>129</sup>

In the Tait Up. Bh II. 1 Śaṅkara says that we cannot even say that Brahman is knowledge because the word 'knowledge' is taken from ordinary life where it implies the modifications of *buddhi* etc. But though, Brahman is not directly expressed (*ucyate*) by the words 'knowledge', 'reality' and so on, it can be implied or indicated (*lakṣyate*) by them. The process of indirect expression is at once a process of negation and affirmation. By progressively pointing out what Brah-

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127. Gī Bh. 13.12

128. Ś. Br. Ā. Up. Bh. I. 4. 7

129. *ibid.* II, 3.6

man is not, the Vedas suggest slowly the ineffable and transcendent reality. The theory of indirect expression (*lakṣaṇā*) is developed further by Sureśvara and others and applied to the interpretation of the *mahāvākya*, 'that thou art'.<sup>130</sup> For our purpose in the present context it is enough if we remember that the Advaitins taught the 'inexpressibility' (*avācya*) of the eternal and attributeless subject Brahman. But Brahman can be negatively and indirectly expressed or indicated by our words.

Madhva attacks this advaita position with all his power. 'Because Viṣṇu can be seen i. e., known, he is not beyond words, he is certainly expressible.'<sup>131</sup> Jayatīrtha explains : Viṣṇu can be the object of vision as other objects like a pot.<sup>132</sup> The Advaitin says : Brahman is inexpressible because it is not an 'object of knowledge'. The Dvaitin affirms Brahman is expressible because he (Viṣṇu) is an "object of knowledge." For the Advaitin, Brahman is the infinite Subject; for the Dvaitin Brahman is the infinite object of our knowledge. These two views on the nature of the Absolute being are the result of their two views on the nature of reality and knowledge.<sup>133</sup>

Madhva continue his attack on the advaita position : if Brahman is really inexpressible then the Advaitin must logically admit that it is unknowable. For Brahman is not know

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130. Ś. Tait. Up. Bh. II. 1

On the theory of 'indirect expression' in Advaita Vedānta. Cf. K. S. Murthy Op. Cit. Chapters : Language and Brahman p. 53 ff Interpretation of Mahāvākyas p. 88ff Sureśvara's views on this point. Cf. P. Hacker. Die Schüler Śaṅkaras p. 74 ff.

131. AV. I. 1. 121 īkṣaṇīyatvato Viṣṇur vācya eva na cānyathā BSBh. I. 1.5

132. NS : brahma vācyaṃ bhavitum arhati na punar avācyaṃ īkṣaṇakarmatvāt, ghaṭavat (cited by S. Siauue, Les Noms. Vediques p. 24) For details Tat. Dī. pp. 39-40

133. Cf. p. 22ff.



by means of sense perception or inference. It is known only through *śruti*. The Advaitins however, claims Madhva, affirm that we know Brahman, through *śruti*, though only 'indirectly', and that it is expressed indirectly by the words of *śruti*. But Jayatīrtha says 'indirect expression is not possible except when the object so indirectly expressed is already directly known.'<sup>34</sup> For example, when one says: 'people live on the Ganges or Devadatta is a lion', one already knows directly the river Ganges and its banks, or the lion, its courage and Devadatta and his valour. So, if Brahman is only imperfectly expressed by *śruti*, then we must have already known the Absolute Being directly by some other means of knowledge. But the only means by which, one can reach Brahman is *śruti*. Therefore, we must say either that Brahman is unknown and unknowable or that Brahman is known directly through *śruti*. No unknown being can be indirectly expressed.

Madhva is very ironic in his attack on the advaita view of the inexpressibility of Brahman. If Brahman is inexpressible how can the Advaitin speak so much of It? The Monists procedure can be compared to the behaviour of a man who says

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134. AV I. 1.122 lakṣyatvam kvāpi dṛṣṭam hi kim tad ity anavasthitiḥ mādhyādī—Viśeṣaś ca tacchabdair uditāḥ sadā. Cf. also NS. hi yasmād anyathā vācyatvābhāve lakṣyatvaṁ kvāpi na dṛṣṭam tasmād avācyaṭve brahmaṇo lakṣyatvāyogāl lakṣaṇayāpi nekṣaṇiyatvam iti seṣaḥ (p. 24)

Vācaspati commenting on Śaṅkara's BSBh. I. 1. 4 writes: "nobody can point out the concrete difference in sweetness between sugarcane, honey and jaggery as "this", because that difference is verbally inexpressible. One can only indicate "the sweetness of honey and the sweetness of sugarcane". Madhva however, thinks that each type of sweetness can be expressed.

NS. lakṣaṇā hi lakṣyārthapramitipūrvikā dṛṣṭā Tat. Dī. on BSBh. I. 1. 11 gives a wealth of information on Madhva's doctrine of the "expressibility" of Brahman.



'I am mute' !<sup>135</sup> The Monist holds that Brahman is only implied (*lakṣya*) and not expressed (*vācya*). But is this '*lakṣyatva*' of Brahman a direct or an indirect expression of Brahman ? If it is a direct expression, then the Advaita position falls; if indirect, then the indirect expression itself will become the indirect expression of indirect knowledge which is impossible.<sup>136</sup> Like the Dvaitin, the Advaitin also admits the principle of 'harmonisation' (*samanvaya*) '*Samanvaya*' means : 'the application of each word and sentence in their primary sense to Brahman.' If Brahman should be inexpressible or only indirectly expressed, the very principle of *samanvaya* would be destroyed.<sup>137</sup> The theory of indirect expression is nothing but a theft of the Vedas, says Madhva. "Silence, you Advaitin; leave your distinctions and stop the theft of our sacred texts (*śāstra*) cries Madhva.<sup>138</sup>

**Nirguṇa Brahman and Saṅguṇa Brahman (attributeless Brahman and Brahman with attributes).**

Though the distinction between Brahman and Īśvara which became prevalent in later Advaita is not so clear in Śāṅkara

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"Sarva-Śabdāvācyaśya lakṣaṇāyukteḥ" is the philosophical principle on which the Mādhvas base their refutation of the Advaita position.

Unless we admit that Brahman is an "object of knowledge" (*viśaya*) we will destroy the very basis of Vedānta, *brahmajijñāsā*". Without *brahmajijñāsā*, there is no liberation.

135. AV. I. 1.124 *avācyaṭvaṃ katham brūyāṃ muko' ham itivat sudhīḥ ! Yena lakṣyam iti proktaṃ lakṣyaśabdena so' vadat.*
136. AV, I. 1.121. The fallacy of *anavasthā* infects such a position.
137. *ibid.* 141 *samanvaye pratijñāte śabdagocarataiva hi prathamapratipādyā syāt tadabhāve kuto' nvayaḥ*  
*ibid.* 142 *katham ca lakṣaṇavādi brūyād brahmasamanvayaṃ Yo' sau śabdasya mukhyārthas tatraiva syāt samanvayaḥ Cf. also 143-144*  
*ibid.* 148-152
138. *ibid.* 151-*mā vado mā vijānihi tyajāsmacchastra-coratām*

still he makes a distinction between the attributeless Brahman and Brahman with attributes. In Śaṅkara, Brahman and Īśvara are more or less interchangeable words. But his view that 'saguṇa Brahman' is the object of the Vedic statements which predicate attributes of the Supreme Brahman, have given Śaṅkara's later followers the opportunity to distinguish Brahman from Īśvara and to identify Īśvara with the Saguṇa Brahman. For our purpose it is enough if we remember that Śaṅkara himself considered Brahman to be attributeless, unspeakable etc. This led him to admit that the 'śruti-sentences' which speak of the Absolute as possessing qualities refer to saguṇa Brahman, the 'objectified Absolute'.<sup>139</sup>

In *Prakāśātman* we come across the idea that the 'nirguṇa Brahman', in as much as it is the support of 'māyā' (ignorance) is the cause of the world.<sup>140</sup> *Prakāśātman* thus conceives Brahman first of all as unrelated to māyā (nirguṇa Brahman); this very Brahman, in as much it is related to māyā is thought of as the cause of the world (saguṇa Brahman), the object of the second sūtra of the B. S. where Brahman is asserted as the cause of the origination etc., of the world, we do not have a real and essential, but only a relative and accidental definition of Brahman (*taṭasthalakṣaṇa*). The essential definition of Brahman is that it is being, knowledge and bliss.<sup>141</sup>

Sarvajñātmanuni goes a step further, teaching that Brahman when surrounded by and reflected in māyā gives

139. On the question of the interchangeability of "Īśvara" and "param Brahman" Cf. "Eigentümlichkeiten der Lehre und Terminologie Śaṅkara's P. Hacker, p.284 ff

140. K. Cammann Op. Cit. Das Brahman ist die Weltursache als Substrat der Māyā, welche die Materialursache der Welt ist. (p, 123)

141. *Prakāśātman* uses the expression "visuddha brahman" to distinguish Brahman in his pure state from "anirvacanīyamāyā-viśiṣṭam kārṇam brahma". ibid. p.115 ff.  
ibid. p. 115 ff *Prakāśātman* uses the expression 'upalakṣaṇa' for the accidental definition.

rise to *Īśvara* and when reflected in the *antaḥkāraṇa* gives rise to the individual self.<sup>142</sup>

According to the Advaitins '*fruti*' itself, as in Muṇḍ Up. 1.1.4 distinguishes between an inferior (*aparā*) and a superior (*parā*) knowledge (*vidyā*). The inferior knowledge, says, the Advaitin is reserved to the spiritually less gifted, who think of Brahman as the creator and lord of the universe, endowed with all qualities, superior to all, yet personal. The superior knowledge, on the other hand, centres round the qualityless Brahman (*nirguṇa*) that is beyond all definitions and specifications. This superior knowledge is achieved only by an intuition of identity reserved to the spiritually perfect. The '*fruti*' statements which predicate qualities of Brahman directly denote the '*saguṇa Brahman*' and only indirectly the '*nirguṇa Brahman*'. The quality statements of '*fruti*' pertain to the inferior knowledge and are intended to lead man gradually to the higher level of knowledge.<sup>143</sup>

As we have already explained, according to Madhva the whole of *fruti* and *smṛti* teach only one absolute being, Viṣṇu, who is identical with Brahman. The Viṣṇu taught by the sacred texts is the abode of all good qualities. According to

142. Cf. S. Dasgupta. A Hist. of Indian Phil. Vol. II. p. 111 ff.

143. O. Lacombe : 'L' Absolu selon le Vedānta' (p.216 f) "La langue sanscrite elle-meme en tenant le mot concret 'brahman' pour un mot neutre atteste que la realite supreme, dans le mesure où elle est adequate-ment exprimee par ce terme, n'est pas consideree par elle comme une personne. Il va de soi que, Śāṅkara fait sienne et accentue cette maniere de voir. Et pourtant nous avons deja rencontre dans les perspectives de sa pensee l'idee d'un Dieu personnel. Īśvara, ou Īśa, qu'il denomme aussi Brahman. Il distingue en effet une sagesse supreme (*parā-vidyā*) et une sagesse inferieure (*aparā-vidyā*) qui ont respectivement pour objects le Brahman supreme sans qualites (*para-nirguṇa-brahman*) et le Brahman inferieure affecte de qualites. L'un et l'autre sont le meme Brahman; mais, envisage de deux points de vue ...."

the Mādhvas, the sacred texts never make a distinction between an attributeless Brahman and a Brahman with qualities. "It is wrong to say that one and same Brahman is said to be endowed with the qualities of producing the world, of being seen and expressed, when a soul is in the state of ignorance, though in the state of knowledge, Brahman is said to be attributeless, unseen and inexpressible."<sup>144</sup> He continues: "Nowhere in the Vedas are two types of Brahman taught, one saguṇa and another nirguṇa"<sup>145</sup> The Vedas teach only Viṣṇu and his supremacy. Even the word 'Ātman' (self) is used to denote the cause of the world, the supreme Viṣṇu.

The Advaitins' position that 'nirguṇa Brahman' is indirectly expressed by the various qualities of 'saguṇa Brahman' is beset with many difficulties. If as the Advaitins claim, the 'nirguṇa Brahman' can be indirectly expressed, then it has at least one quality, that of being expressed indirectly':<sup>146</sup> On the other hand if one accepts the contention of the Advaitins that the 'nirguṇa Brahman' is inexpressible by any word, then it evidently lies beyond all indirect expression as well, since, as we have already pointed out, every indirect expression must be ultimately based on a direct knowledge.

Granting the advaitic view that all vedic 'quality-predications' really mean that their direct content, viz., the 'saguṇa Brahman' should be transcended and that their real purpose is to suggest (lakṣyate) 'nirguṇa Brahman'; then why should there be such a multiplicity of predications in 'śruti'? Do they all convey just one meaning viz., the denial of the ultimate character of 'saguṇa Brahman'? or do they give us diverse meanings? The Advaitins evidently admit that the

144. Tat. Dī. p. 40 ekam eva brahmāvidyāvasthāyām sraṣṭṭvādiguṇais saguṇam dṛśyam, vācyam ca; vidyāvasthāyam nirguṇam adṛśyam avācyam ceti cen na.

145. ibid. p. 43 na ca saguṇam nirguṇam ceti dvividham brahma vedeṣu pratipādyata....

146. AV, III, 2.185.



multiplicity of predications are intended to deny ultimately the diverse aspects of Brahman. In this case, 'Śruti' recognizes in Brahman various qualities. Every denial or negation moreover, implies an affirmation. So if the Vedas negate all perfections of Brahman, then that very denial must be based on the affirmation of all perfections. Again, the view that the Vedas make known the 'nirguṇa Brahman' through the knowledge of 'saguṇa Brahman' is false. The terms 'saguṇa' and 'nirguṇa' mutually exclude one another. So through 'saguṇa Brahman' we can never reach the 'nirguṇa Brahman'.

Madhva also rejects the idea that Brahman as the cause of the world gives only an accidental definition of the Supreme Being. 'That from which the birth etc., of the world', is the essential definition of Viṣṇu alone.<sup>147</sup> That he is the cause of the origination of the world is evidently the immediate and proper definition of Viṣṇu'. For Madhva and Jayatīrtha the first sūtra on the necessity of an inquiry into Brahman, indicates the object of our inquiry; viz., Brahman; who is none other than Viṣṇu. In the second sūtra, Brahman (Viṣṇu) is properly and really defined as the cause of the world. As Jayatīrtha points out : 'the fact that Brahman is the cause etc., of the world indicates the marks or characteristics inherent in his nature'<sup>148</sup> So the second sūtra offers us a real definition of Brahman. This definition implies also the truth that Viṣṇu alone and not any other jīva or matter is the cause of the world. To be the cause etc., of the world are attri-

147. AV. I. 198 asyodbhavādihetutvaṃ sākṣād eva svalakṣaṇaṃ.

148. NS svarūpāntargataṃ evedaṃ brahmaṇo jagajjanmādikāraṇatvaṃ na māyāvādyuktaritā tātastham ity arthaḥ Cf. also BSBh. I. 1.2 Trivikrama in Tat. Dī. pp. 30-31 explains with many quotations from the Sacred texts how 'janmādyasya yataḥ' is the proper definition of Viṣṇu. The vedas teach only "Saguṇa Brahman", for he alone is the giver of liberation. Vide : BSBh. I. 1.7



butes of Viṣṇu just like his attributes of knowledge and bliss. For Madhva, Viṣṇu is endowed not only with the attributes of knowledge, bliss and so on, or with the attributes of being the cause etc., of the universe but also with other infinite qualities. For, the Brahman, who is taught by the Śruti is the giver of liberation, i. e., the Brahman, whose knowledge finally frees us from transmigration. This Brahman is Viṣṇu, the abode of all auspicious qualities.

The Advaitic view that Brahman can be the support of *māyā* or that it can be in any way connected with *māyā* is for Madhva pure blasphemy. How can ignorance (*māyā*, or *avidyā*) have any connection with the omniscient being?<sup>149</sup> Of course for the Advaitin, Brahman is beyond omniscience because omniscience supposes the subject-object distinction. The Advaitin says that Brahman is just self-luminous reality. Jayatīrtha asks how self-luminosity and *avidyā* (not to be self-luminous) could possibly exist together? To say that Brahman is linked to *māyā* is to deny his self-luminosity.<sup>150</sup>

Thus for Madhva, Viṣṇu, who is the direct purport of all the sacred texts, is the cause of the origination etc., of the world, is the giver of liberation to the devotees, and is the ocean of infinite qualities. He is the only independent being and agent and all other beings depend on him. It is by knowing him and by acknowledging his supremacy that we become recipients of his favour.

149. Māv. kh. ajñatākhillasamvettur gḥṭate na kutaścana.

150. Māv. kh. Tī.

## CHAPTER III

### VIṢṆU IN HIMSELF

This third chapter is dedicated to the study of Madhva's views on the inner nature of Viṣṇu : What Viṣṇu is in himself. These are a mixture of religio-mythological data and philosophical ideas. Madhva for example thinks that Viṣṇu has a divine consort;<sup>1</sup> that he lives in a special world called *Vaikuṇṭha*, surrounded by a number of divine servants,<sup>2</sup> that he lies on the mythical serpent *Śeṣa*, upon the primeval waters.<sup>3</sup> These are ideas, inherited from mythology. In our exposition of the idea of God according to Madhva, we shall evidently concentrate our attention on the philosophical and

1. *Tattvasaṃkhyāna*; *Dvādaśastotra* etc.  
On the myth of Viṣṇu's divine consort. Vide : J. Gonda *Aspects of Early Vaiṣṇavism* p. 212 ff.  
'One the other hand Viṣṇu before, and besides, being constantly associated with Śrī-Lakṣmī, maintained connections of a more or less temporary nature with other divine women'. (ibid. p. 226)  
Cf. also S. Jaiswal. 'The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism'. pp. 88-109.
2. Ch. up Bh. III. 13 *Vaikuṇṭha* is the highest world, with five gate-keepers, *Jaya*, *Vijaya* etc.
3. *Dvādaśastotra* Canto IX. 5 Canto VII. 7 etc.  
On the serpent *Śeṣa*. Cf. J. Gonda : *Aspects of Early Vaiṣṇavism* p. 151 ff; also ibid. p. 89 ff. 'According to the account given in the Mbh, 3 a 263, Viṣṇu is the Supreme Soul, who at the termination of such a long period, not only burns the world, but, as the earth becomes flooded with water, also sleeps upon the serpent *Śeṣa* .... His conception has no doubt arisen from the ancient belief of the One or Primordial Being resting on or emanating from the primeval waters. RV. 10, 121, where *Hiraṇyagarbha*, identified with *Prajāpati*, and in later times, with *Brahmā*, is said to have arisen from the great water which pervaded the universe'. (ibid. pp. 89-90)

theological aspects of his thought. What does Madhva mean, for example, when he says that Viṣṇu has a body? Or when he affirms that Viṣṇu has all the auspicious qualities?

## I

**The Body of Viṣṇu**

Madhva develops his views on the body of Viṣṇu in the context of his anti-Śaivite stance. The polemic against Śaivism formed an essential part of the Vaiṣṇava teaching for centuries.<sup>4</sup> The Brahma-Sūtras on which Madhva comments have an attack on the old Śaiva-Pāśupata teaching,<sup>5</sup> though they attack also the old Vaiṣṇava Pāñcarātra doctrines. While commenting on the Pāśupatyādhikaraṇa of the BS (that part of the BS which attacks the Pāśupatas).<sup>6</sup> Madhva tries to prove that Śiva is not the Absolute Being and therefore, he cannot be the cause of the origination of the world. According to the Śaivites, Rudra is a bodiless being.<sup>7</sup> "Since Śiva is bodiless, he cannot have any causal relation to the world", says Madhva.<sup>8</sup> What Madhva intends to say by this statement is that only an embodied being can enter into a causal relation with another being. Madhva compares a bodiless being to a corpse.<sup>9</sup> A bodiless being is inactive. Trivikrama explains that this argument is taken from experience.<sup>10</sup> Our experience tells us that only embodied beings like a

4. On the anti-Śaivism of the Vaiṣṇava-Purāṇas, of. P. Hacker. *Prahlāda*, Vol. II. pp. 166, 184 etc.  
The Vaiṣṇavas subordinated Śiva to Viṣṇu.  
(ibid. p. 157, 166 etc.)

5. BS.II.2.37-41

6. BSBh.II.2.37-41.

7. The Śaivāgamas teach that Śiva is bodiless  
(S. Dasgupta : *A History of Indian Philosophy* Vol. V. p. 22)

8. BSBh. II.2.38 *śaśarīratvāt tasya jagatāsambandho na Yuṣyate kartṛtvena.*

9. ibid. *mṛtapuruṣavat*

10. Tat. Dī. p. 219 *śaśarīrasya hi kulālādeḥ kartṛtvena sambandho dṛṣṭah.*

potter act as causes. Experience moreover, shows us that a cause before it acts must place itself on a ground (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and this evidently is possible only if the cause has a body.<sup>11</sup>

It the vaiṣṇava philosophical tradition it is accepted that only an embodied being can really act and act purposefully. It is from the motion of the body, we come to know of activity. Certainly, the spirit is the ultimate source of activity and intention. But it is only from the movements of the body and from the position it takes and the direction towards which it tends, the activity of the spirit stands revealed.

Madhva's argumentation indirectly throws light on his doctrine of causality. It is clear that for Madhva, Viṣṇu's causality does not consist in the production of a totally new being. Madhva tries to understand and interpret the causality of Viṣṇu on the model of the activity of embodied beings which act on pre-existing matter. Since the elements on which the agent acts are material, it is necessary that the agent be endowed with a body.

Madhva teaches that Viṣṇu fulfils the conditions necessary for the production of the world, because he has a body. That Viṣṇu is endowed with a body and that he is the cause of the world, we know only from the sacred texts. Madhva cites an unknown work called *Pañgīśruti* in support of his teaching that Viṣṇu has a body. 'He (Viṣṇu) has an intellect, he has a mind, he has members and submembers';<sup>12</sup> and further : 'he has a good body (which according to Trivikrama means 'he has a defectless body')'<sup>13</sup> he is sweet smelling, he is luminous with knowledge and has great power'.<sup>14</sup> So, the Vedic

11. BSBh.II.2.39

12. BSBh.II.2.41 buddhimān manomān, aṅga-pratyāṅgavān

13. ibid. saddehaḥ sukhagandhaś ca jñānabhāḥ satparākramah Tat.Dī. p.220 saddeho nirdoṣadehaḥ

14. ibid. jñānajñānaḥ nājñānamiśrajñānaḥ sukhasukhāḥ na duḥkhamiśritasukhāḥ

testimony as well as reasoning based on sacred tradition prove that Viṣṇu has a body. Madhva incorporates into his system all the mythological statements on the body of Viṣṇu, which are to be found in the Vaiṣṇava texts. 'Viṣṇu has five colours, he is fair, red, golden or dark, he is multicoloured, he has a pleasing taste and smell, he has the capacity to be hot and cold, or to be neither according to circumstances etc.'<sup>15</sup>

In what does the body of Viṣṇu consist? Negatively Viṣṇu's body is not material; it is not made out of primal matter. In BSBh, Madhva explains, in what sense Viṣṇu is said to be formless (*arūpa*).<sup>16</sup> If God should have external, perceptible and tangible form and colour, he could not have been eternal, for such forms and colours are products of primal matter (elements of matter). Viṣṇu, however, is completely different from matter.<sup>17</sup> Viṣṇu pervades over the whole of matter and is the inner principle of matter's activity.<sup>18</sup> In this sense, (i. e., in that he is not a product of matter) Viṣṇu is formless. As Jayatīrtha remarks "body (*deha*) denotes a body which springs from the union of man and woman". It is therefore, better to say that Viṣṇu has no body.<sup>19</sup> But on the other hand, those texts which ascribe to Viṣṇu a body, colours, form etc., have a place in Madhva's system. The colours and form of Viṣṇu are not material. says Madhva- When certain texts speak of Viṣṇu as formless they only mean that Viṣṇu's body is completely different

15. Ch. up. Bh. VIII. 13

ibid. VIII. 6, 1

Mu. up. Bh. III. 1, 3

16. BSBh. III.2.14. The problem-rūpattvād anityatvam ityato vakti .... Tat. pr. explains the problem Tat. Di bhautikāni hi rūpāny anityatvavyāptāni

17. BSBh. III.2.15 vilakṣaṇarūpatvāt Cf, Tat. Di p. 324

18. BSBh. III.2.14 prakṛtyādipravartakatvena taduttamatvān naiva rūpavād brahma

19. Tat. Pr. on BSBh. III.2.14 and 15  
Pr. Di, on Bh. Gi. Bh. II.20



from material bodies. Madhva tries to illustrate this doctrine by means of an example. 'At night we say that a house lies in darkness. even though the inner light of the eyes (the faculty of seeing possessed by the inmates of the house) and torches and lamps which illumine the house still exist in the house. Yet, it is right to say that the house lies in darkness. We speak thus, in order to distinguish the smaller lights from the great light of the sun, which illumines the house during the day.'<sup>20</sup> The question whether the comparison is pertinent to our present context may be left out. What Madhva wishes to express is the idea of 'otherness.' Madhva insists on the otherness of Viṣṇu's body from all material bodies, because it is not a product of matter. Therefore, Viṣṇu, is said to be formless. At the same time. Madhva has to reconcile this doctrine with the philosophical axiom that a body is necessary in order that causal action may be exercised, and also with the religio-mythological texts which speak of the body and attributes of the body of Viṣṇu.

The mythological doctrine of the body of Viṣṇu is based on the *Puruṣasūkta*<sup>21</sup> which speak of the primeval Man' (*ṣuṣa*) from whose (self) sacrifice all the sacrificial hymns, (mantras) all beings and the whole universe arose. In verse 13 of this hymn, it is said that the moon arose from the mind of 'this man', the sun from his eyes, Indra and Agni from his mouth, and the Wind-god from his breath. In Vedic religion and in Hinduism in general all these beings are gods. In Vaiṣṇavism, the 'primeval man' (*ṣuṣa*) is identified with

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20. BSBh.III 2.15 Yathā cakṣurādiprakāṣe vidyamāne  
vailakṣaṇyād aprakāṣādivyavahārah  
Tat.Dī. p.324

ibid. p.324 tathā vilakṣaṇarūpattvād arūptvāśrutināṃ,  
rūpatvāśrutināṃ ca na vaiyarthyaṃ

21. RV. 10.90 Der Mond ist aus seinem Geist entstanden,  
die Sonne entstand aus seinem Auge; aus seinem Mund  
Indra und Agni, aus Seinem Aushauch entstand der  
Wind.

(ibid. 13. Transl. Geldner).

Viṣṇu. The gods mentioned above therefore, spring from the various members of Viṣṇu; a statement which presupposes that Viṣṇu has a body. While dealing with the topic of liberation, Madhva once again touches on this Puruṣa-myth. The gods, who are as much in need of liberation as we, should meditate on those members of the body of Viṣṇu from which they arose, in order to reach release. Through such a meditation, they will attain the liberating knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

The view that Viṣṇu has a body, naturally brings in other problems. To have a body is to be under the law of birth and death. To this difficulty Madhva's answer is a quotation from *Paramaśruti* which says: "In the case of Vāsudeva, origination means just manifestation and nothing else. All other beings like Brahmā have bodies that come into being through the actuating force of Viṣṇu. The body of Hari is unoriginated and eternal,"<sup>23</sup> What the word 'manifestation' in this text means is not clear. But at a certain stage of development of the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas 'manifestation' (*prādurbhāva*) means '*avatāra*'<sup>24</sup> Perhaps, in the text just cited, *prādurbhāva* means *avatāra*. It can also mean the 'manifestation' of the body of Viṣṇu through his special favour.

22. BSBh. III.3.63-67.

23. VTV. no 453 Utpattir Vāsudevasya prādurbhāvo na na cāparaḥ

24. On the meaning of the word 'Prādurbhāva'—Vide; P. Hacker: Zur Entwicklung der Avatāralehre WZKSOA. Bd. IV. 1960. p. 47 ff. "Das Auftreten des Gottes wird vorwiegend als Annehmen einer 'Gestalt' bezeichnet (rūpa, vapus, tanu, ākrti). Der Terminus fuer alle drei Verdiesseitigungen (hier Eber, Mannlöwe und Zwerg) ist "Prādurbhāva" Erscheinung .... Andere alte Texte, die Viṣṇu's Verdiesseitigungen aufzählen, nennen diese ebenfalls noch nicht "avatār", sondern "prādurbhāva" Dieser Terminus ist ein Versuch, das Einmalige, das Viṣṇu's Geborenwerden unterscheidet von solchen Geburten, die durch das Gesetz der Seelenwanderung bedingt sind, prägnant zum Ausdruck zu bringen."

Viṣṇu's body is in itself unmanifest, invisible.<sup>25</sup> Only through the special grace of Viṣṇu and on account of the special worthiness of a soul does the body of Viṣṇu become visible. In the Bh Gī, for example, we find Kṛṣṇa manifesting his universal form to his worthy devotee Arjuna.<sup>26</sup>

Of what then does the body of Viṣṇu positively consist? To this question Madhva answers that the body of Viṣṇu consists of nothing but his attributes. 'Nārāyaṇa, whose body is nothing but the totality of his attributes....' writes Madhva in his AV.<sup>27</sup> As Jayatīrtha remarks, Madhva by this wants to separate radically Viṣṇu and his attributes from the world of matter and of souls.<sup>28</sup> In the BSBh, it is said that Brahman's (Viṣṇu's) head, arms and trunk are made out of being, knowledge and bliss.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, Madhva teaches that the attributes and the members of Viṣṇu are not distinct

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25. BSBh. I. 2.21

ibid. III. 2.23 avyaktam eva tad brahma svataḥ  
arūpam akṣaram brahma sadavyaktam ca niṣkalam  
ibid. III. 2. 24, 25.

26. Bh. Gī. Bh. XI. 47, 48.

27. AV. I. 1. 1 Nārāyaṇam nikhilapūrṇagunaikadeham  
NS. The word "eka" (one or only) is not to be understood numerically—i. e. as *one* but as "only." What Jayatīrtha means to say is that Viṣṇu's only body is composed of his attributes.

28. De l' affirmation que Dieu a un corps qui ne se distingue pas de lui même, qui est spirituel (aprākṛta) n'étant constitué que de *guṇa*, n'étant que l'unité de ces *guṇa*. C'est sur ce point qu'insiste Jayatīrtha dans son commentaire : le mot "eka" n'implique pas l'idée de limitation numérique, pense-t-il, mais doit s'entendre au sens de *kevala*, c'est-à-dire "isolé". (ekaśabdah kevalārtha) L'intention de l'auteur a donc été de séparer radicalement la sphère de réalité de la Substance divine et de ses attributs; de celle du monde de la matière et des âmes. (S. Siauve, op. cit. p. 4) cf. Bh. Gī. Bh. IX. 5 with Jayatīrtha's Pr. Dī.

29. BSBh. II. 2.41; especially Īs. up. Bh. 8

from one another or from Viṣṇu.<sup>30</sup> They all form just 'one being', identical with itself and different from all other beings.

Rāmānuja's teaching (Madhva never refers explicitly to Rāmānuja in any of his works) that the souls and matter form the body of Viṣṇu, is not acceptable to Madhva. Souls and matter do not form the body of Viṣṇu. In BSBh I.4.1 Madhva quotes the Kaṭh Up text (III, 11) where the word '*avyakta*' occurs. Though the word '*avyakta*' means '*prakṛti*' (matter) Madhva thinks that it primarily signifies Viṣṇu, because matter is dependent on Viṣṇu. The dependence of matter and also of souls on Viṣṇu and the indwelling of Viṣṇu both, in matter and in souls gives us a certain right to say that matter and souls form the body of Viṣṇu.<sup>31</sup> But Trivikrama makes every effort to point out that matter does not *really* from his body.<sup>32</sup>

## II

### The Attributes of Viṣṇu

Is the Absoulte Being endowed with attributes or is it attributeless? The Advaitin affirms that Brahman is attributeless (*nirguṇa brahma*).<sup>33</sup> The Dvaitin on the other hand

30. Kaṭh. up. Bh. IV. 14.

In his Bh. Gi. Bh. VII. 7 this idea is very pithily expressed,

Ramanuja thinks the world of matter and souls form the cosmic body of Viṣṇu. In Śrī Bhāṣya II. 3.18 Rāmānuja writes; the spiritual and material beings in all their states form the body of Viṣṇu. He is their Soul, their Self. Because of the fact that he is eternally "incorporated" in them, he has these beings as his modes.

31. BSBh. I. 4.1 tasyaiva pūratantryāc charīrarūpe'vyakte vinyastasyaparamātmāna evāvyakta śabdena gṛhītaḥ.

32. Tat. Dī. p. 145 tasyaiva Viṣṇoḥ śarīrarūpam avyaktaṁ tadadhinatvāc charīram iva rūpam asya na tu Hareś sarīratvāt tasyeti śarīrarūpam ...

33. Cf. Chap. II p. 58 ff.



affirms that Brahman is endowed with all good qualities (*saguṇam*). This is one of the points dividing these two schools of Vedānta and on which controversy has raged for centuries. How earnestly Madhva took this point to heart can be seen from the '*maṅgala śloka*' of his works in which he affirms the '*saguṇatva*'<sup>34</sup> of Brahman. Madhva's teaching on this point can be summarised in two short phrases : Viṣṇu is defectless (*nirdoṣa*) and he is full of all qualities (*sarvagūṇapūrṇa*).

We may ask how Madhva knows that Viṣṇu is full of all auspicious attributes. As has already been explained in our first chapter, the only means of knowledge which reveals the Absolute to us is '*śruti*'. So the most important argument for the '*saguṇatva*' of Viṣṇu is taken from *śruti*. In all his works, Madhva quotes innumerable sacred texts to prove that Viṣṇu is an ocean of qualities<sup>35</sup>. To begin with, the two words commonly used to designate the Supreme Being, *ātman* 'and

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34. AV. I. 1.1 Nārāyaṇam nikhilapūrṇaguṇadeham nirdoṣam....

VTV. no. 1 Nārāyaṇam sadā vande nirdoṣāśeṣasad-guṇam

Madhva's writings abound in words and phrases denoting the infinite, limitless perfections of Viṣṇu. "Nārāyaṇa surpasses all in excellence and is untouched by defects" (A. Bh. 1) "He is filled with all perfections" (*guṇa-pūrṇa*) (ibid. 5) "He has infinite perfections" (*ananta guṇa*) (ibid. 9). He is utterly perfect with unlimited qualities (*amita-guṇa* BSBh. 1.2.12). All the good qualities we usually predicate of things are found in the most exalted form in Viṣṇu (BSB. 2.3.29). Whoever meditates properly on Viṣṇu should contemplate his plenitude and infinitude and his distinction from all other beings (VTV 437 and 455). Like all the Vaiṣṇavas, Madhva too insists on the '*ubhayalingatva*' i. e., the two forms of ascription, freedom from all defects and the possession of all positive qualities of Viṣṇu. (MbTN. 1.10.12) so the idea that Viṣṇu is *guṇa-pūrṇa* is central to the teaching of Madhva.

35. BSBh. I. 2.1, 2.



*brahman'* according to Madhva, mean perfection or fullness<sup>36</sup> Both *śruti* and the *BS* enjoin upon us an inquiry into Brahman. But this Brahman is not the attributeless Absolute of the Monists; but Viṣṇu, who is the ocean of all qualities and who is the purport (*tātparya*) of all the sacred texts.<sup>37</sup> *Paramopaniṣad* tells us that Viṣṇu is devoid of all defects and his very form is the totality of all qualities.<sup>38</sup>

The difficulty which Madhva has to face now is how to interpret those texts which speak of Brahman as attributeless (*nirguṇa-śruti*). Though Madhva has not specifically treated this problem, the general direction of his thought as his commentators have explained and systemated it, can be clearly seen from the scattered remarks in his works.<sup>39</sup>

In the *Īkṣatyādhikaraṇa* of the *BSBh*, Madhva quotes a text from the *Śve*. Up which ends with the words '*kevala nirguṇaś ca*' (*kevala*=only, simple etc, and *nirguṇa* = devoid of attributes).<sup>40</sup> In this passage, the Absolute Being which is one and imperceptibly present in all beings is said to be '*kevala and nirguṇa*'. Trivikrama and Jayatīrtha interpret the word '*kevala*' as '*unmixed*'.<sup>41</sup> In fact Madhva is more explicit; '*unmixed with matter*'. It can also mean '*one without an equal or superior*'. The word '*nirguṇa*' is intended to deny all material qualities to Brahman. Jayatīrtha says that Viṣṇu

36. AV. 1.1.127 ātma-brahmādayas śabdāḥ sākṣāt pūrṇābhidhāyinaḥ.

37. AV. I. 1. 145 : tasmāe chāstreṇa jijñāsyam asmadiyaṃ guṇārṇavaṃ

38. VTV. no. 454 varjitaḥ sarvadoṣair yo gunasarvasva-mūrtimān

39. B. N. K. Sharma Op. Cit. p. 240 ff.

40. Śve. up. VI. 11 eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarva-vyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā, karmādhyaḥṣaḥ sarvabhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ceti

41. Tāt. Pr. on *BSBh*. I. 1. 10 kevalo vimīśraḥ

is untouched by even sattvādiguṇas.<sup>42</sup> The 'nirguṇa śrutis, therefore are intended to deny material qualities to Viṣṇu. As a matter of fact, they may be construed as an indirect affirmation of the non-material character of the attributes of Viṣṇu.

Not only does the sacred tradition testify to the 'saguṇatvam' of Viṣṇu, but reasoning too supported by śruti can prove this point. All the reasons which Madhva brings forward are rooted in his ontology and epistemology which we have briefly sketched in the first chapter. Here we intend only to point out how Madhva uses these principles to prove the point under discussion.

Madhva's denial of 'nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa'<sup>43</sup> is very significant. According to Madhva, every object is individual, particular, endowed with attributes. Every true apprehension is the apprehension of a qualified object. Our knowledge and the object of knowledge, both of which are correlative, are always experienced by us as '*sa viśeṣa*' (endowed with attributes). Madhva would say that human intercourse would be impossible if the objects were not individual, distinct and endowed with distinguishing attributes. If one were to assert that beings are attributeless, then indirectly one affirms that beings are endowed with attributes as when a man says that he is a mute.<sup>44</sup> Now, God who is the highest Being must have an infinite number of infinite qualities. This general principle is the underlying reason which impels Madhva

42. Cf. Chap. III. p. 63ff Tat. Dī. p. 44

nirguṇaśabdaḥ prākṛtaguṇa niśedhātmakāḥ  
The word *aham* in the upanīśadic sentence '*aham brahmāsmi*, is interpreted to mean : *aheyam* i. e., that which is free from evil or he who is not to be shunned". So the whole sentence expresses the defectless nature of Brahman. (VTV. 267; Ā Up Bh. 1. 2. 1; 1. 4. 17)

43. Cf. Chap. I. p. 11

44. AV. I. 1. 108 nirviśeṣatvam etena mūko'ham itivadbhavet

to assert that an attributeless Absolute cannot be the purport of the Vedas.<sup>45</sup>

From the absolute power and independence of Viṣṇu, we can argue to the defectlessness and attributes of Viṣṇu. From experience we know that we are not full of qualities and not without defects, because we are not powerful enough to get what we want and to avoid what we dislike. But in the case of Viṣṇu there is no such limitation of power or extrinsic dependence.<sup>46</sup>

For the Advaitins, the word 'nirguṇa' means transcendence over all qualities. For Madhva, however, that word can only mean 'absence of all auspicious qualities'. Therefore, to say that Brahman is *nirguṇa* is equivalent to the assertion that Viṣṇu is devoid of all auspicious qualities. Now, only the demons are devoid of all good qualities. So when the Advaitins affirm that Brahman is *nirguṇa*, they are in fact asserting that Brahman is of demoniac nature.<sup>47</sup> We can go still further and say that the Advaitins' *nirguṇa*-brahman is nothing but emptiness (*śūnyatā*). What is that Brahman which is devoid of all qualities, of which no perfection can be properly predicated except *śūnyatā*?<sup>48</sup>

The doctrine that every Vedic word primarily denotes Viṣṇu (one aspect or other of Viṣṇu) is a clear proof of the numberlessness of Viṣṇu's attributes. Such texts like 'it is impossible to enumerate or speak of the qualities of the Lord for they are innumerable', or 'all the qualities declared or

45. Cf. Chap. II. p. 101ff

46. AV. I. 1. 100 hitākriyādidoṣaṃ ca vakṣyaty eva svayaṃ prabhuḥ nirguṇatvaṃ ca tenaiva niṣiddhaṃ prabhunā svayaṃ

47. AV. I. 1. 103 nirguṇatvaṃ tadā ca syād āsuratvaṃ na cānyathā

NS. guṇaśabdoditasakalāśubharāhityalakṣaṇaṃ āsuratvaṃ eva syāt

48. AV. IV. 2.48

undeclared in 'śruti' are found in Viṣṇu';<sup>49</sup> state clearly that Viṣṇu is not only endowed with qualities but also that he possesses all qualities.

The general statement that Viṣṇu is endowed with attributes, is philosophically and theologically important, in as much as it shows how the mādḥva conception of the Absolute Being differs from that of Śaṅkara. However it is not enough to reveal to us the inner nature of Viṣṇu. A more detailed study of some of the important attributes of Viṣṇu will at once give us a deeper understanding of the mādḥva idea of God and of the mādḥva way of thinking. It will also show us, how Madhva's system is rooted in the Viṣṇava tradition. *Pāṇcarātra* tradition for example speaks of six special qualities of Viṣṇu. They are 'knowledge, lordship, ability or potency, strength, splendour and virility.'<sup>50</sup>

Madhva does not deny any of them, though some of them get new nuances in his system. He stresses other attributes, not insisted upon in the *Pāṇcarātras*. Following the upaniṣadic tradition, Madhva affirms that Viṣṇu is being, knowledge,

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49. BSBh. II. 1.38

50. On the six guṇas in *Pāṇcarātra* texts. Cf. O. Schrader "Intr. to the *Pāṇcarātra*"; p. 31ff. In Sanskrit, the six guṇas are known as "Jñāna, aiśvarya, śakti, bala, virya, and tejas".

"In their totality the guṇas make up the body of Vāsudeva, the highest personal god, as well as that of his consort...."

The attributes of the Lord are also stressed in the Bh. Gītā and the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas.

In the Bh. Gītā : "Kṛṣṇa has all the attributes hitherto ascribed to the Supreme Being". Cf. B. Kumara-ppa.

Op. Cit. pp. 51-61.

On how Viṣṇu-and Bhāgavata Purāṇas describe the attributes of Viṣṇu. Cf. *ibid.* p. 92ff.

Also : P. Hacker. *Prahlāda....*, Vol. I. pp. 80-88 and p. 128ff.

and bliss. 'Viṣṇu is the fullness of bliss. The attributes being etc., form his own essence'.

### Viṣṇu is Being (sat, satyam)

In comparison with bliss (*ānanda*) the attribute 'being' (*sat*) gets only scanty attention in the writings of Madhva. In the AV, commenting on BS I, 1,15, Madhva writes 'it is he (Viṣṇu) alone who is designated by the Mantravarṇa as being, knowledge, and endless (*satyam*, *jñāna*, *anantam*)'!<sup>51</sup> Later on, Madhva explains the meaning of '*sat*' in the following manner: 'that (Viṣṇu) is called real (being, *sat*) because he causes existence'.<sup>52</sup> So, for Madhva, Viṣṇu is called '*sat*' or '*satyam*' in order to confirm what has already been said in the second sūtra of the BS, namely, Viṣṇu is the cause of the origination of the universe. Jayatīrtha also says that Visnu is the the one who causes things to reach existence (*sadbhāva*)<sup>53</sup> Viṣṇu is the cause of the origination of things (*janma*).<sup>54</sup> Later on, Jayatīrtha writes 'Viṣṇu is called '*sat*' because everything different from him depends on him'.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps, Jayatīrtha tries here to go beyond the origination-dissolution cycle (*śṛṣṭi-pralaya*) and establish an ontological dependence of things on Viṣṇu.

Basing himself on the etymology of the word '*sat*', Madhva arrives at the conclusion that Brahman is called '*sat*' because

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51. BSBh. I. 2. 15; Tāt. Dī. p. 90

vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma Br. A. up. IX. 29 (BSBh. I. 2. 15) ānando brahmeti vyajānāt Tait. up. III. 6 (ibid) satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma Tait. up. II. 1 (AV. I. 1. 190)

52. AV. I. 1.190

53. ibid. 192 sadbhāvaṁ yāpayed yasmāt satyaṁ tat tena kathyate iti śṛṣṭir iha proktā jagatsadbhāvayāpakam....

54. NS. sadbhāvo janma....tataḥ sat sadbhāvaṁ janma yāpayet, prāpayet sva-~~va~~atiriktaṁ sarvaṁ yasmāt tasmād brahma satyam kathyate, sakala-jagat-janm-akāraṇtvaṁ satyaśabdārthaṁ

(S. Siauue, Les Noms Vediques p. 60)

55. ibid.



he is the principle of life (*jīvanam*) and of destruction.<sup>56</sup> In Madhva, 'sat' does not only mean 'origination' but also life, which is characterised by the possession of 'life-breath'. Jayatīrtha writes : 'when it is said that Devadatta is, it means that Devadatta is alive.'<sup>57</sup> As Madhav has remarked above, Viṣṇu is called 'sat' because he is the cause of the origination of things and the cause of life. If we apply the words of Jayatīrtha cited above, to Viṣṇu we arrive at the following result. When we say that Viṣṇu is, it means that Viṣṇu lives. Metaphysically the mode of Viṣṇu's life, is marked by independence.

What is noteworthy in the mādharma explanation of 'sat' is the fact that Madhva does not formally consider Viṣṇu in himself, but Viṣṇu in his relation to or function in the world. There are texts in Madhva's writings where it is said that Viṣṇu is essentially being (*svarūpeṇa sat*). But the exact meaning of this expression is by no means clear because Madhva says also that the souls are essentially being, knowledge etc. (*svarūpeṇa sat etc.*)<sup>58</sup> The general thrust of mādharma thought certainly allows us to affirm that Viṣṇu's existence (*sattā*) is the highest and the purest, though it is

56. AV. I. 1. 193 "The fact of being "*Sat*" can mean, to be the principle of life. *sattvaṃ jīvanam eva ca*. 'Sat' can also mean, to be the principle of destruction "*Sanna*" (Sanna-from the root *Sad*-to sit, to repose) NS. When we say that Brahman is 'sat' or 'satya', we designate Brahman in as much as he is the cause of the world. Brahman, by entering into the elements gives them 'sat' (manifest existence).

57. NS. *na kevalaṃ janmaiva sac chabdārthaḥ kintu jīvanam ca, prāṇadhāralakṣaṇam sattvaṃ eva....asti Devadatta ity ukte, jīvatīti pratyayāt*

Madhva writes that 'sat' can also mean 'movement'-(*gatiḥ*) ('*gatis*' *cāto satyatā*)

58. BSBh. II. 3.30 *jīvasya jñānānandādirūpatvamuktaṃ ibid. II. 3.31 sa ānandaḥ sa balaḥ sa oja....* Though the souls are said to possess knowledge etc. still they are not infinite, omnipotent etc.

impossible for us to clarify the concept of existence any further.

### Viṣṇu is Knowledge (jñānam, vijñānam)

Viṣṇu is omniscient and this omniscience sets him apart from the souls which possess only partial knowledge (*alpajñā*). The omniscience of Viṣṇu is stated clearly in the sacred tradition.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, it can be proved that Viṣṇu is a conscious and omniscient being, from the fact that he is the sole cause of the universe. An unconscious being is incapable of acting purposefully by itself. While dealing with the production of the world, Madhva asserts that Viṣṇu, the 'creator' of the world, is endowed with knowledge, lordship and the faculty of knowledge.<sup>60</sup>

All is seen by Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu's essential form is knowledge and bliss or, as Madhva puts it, he is of luminous form.<sup>61</sup> Viṣṇu's members are knowledge and bliss. In the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*, Madhva speaks of four types of immediate knowledge : the immediate knowledge of God, of Lakṣmī, of the Yogins and of the non-Yogins. The knowledge of Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī is eternal and embracing the totality of beings, But Viṣṇu's knowledge alone is independent. Lakṣmī's knowledge is dependent on Viṣṇu. They differ also in their depth of comprehension.<sup>62</sup> Jayatīrtha commenting on the above passage says that clarity, distinctness and immediacy are characteristics of knowledge and Viṣṇu alone possesses these in their maximum degree.<sup>63</sup>

59. Mund. Up. II. 2.7 yaḥ sarvajñāḥ...  
BSBh. II. 2.41

60. Cf. Chapter IV p. 90ff.

61. BSBh. II. 2.41 Viṣṇu is 'jñānabhāḥ'. He is "jñānajñānaḥ" Trivikrama, p. 220 nājñānamisrajñānaḥ  
BSBh. III. 2.16 vijñānānandamātratvāt  
ibid. IV. 2.29 Viṣṇu is "tejorūpaḥ"

62. Prl. pūrvadvayam (i. e. the knowledge of Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī) anādinityam svātantryapāratantrābhyām tadviśeṣaḥ pūrvam svaparagatākhilaviśayam...

63. Prl. Ṭī

When Madhva asserts that the knowledge of Viṣṇu is independent, he means to say that Viṣṇu's faculty of knowledge is not presided over by any other being. All beings other than Viṣṇu know only through him, the principal agent of all knowledge. Their faculties of knowledge are presided over and actuated by the various gods and above all by Viṣṇu.<sup>64</sup>

Quoting the *Paramoṇiṣad*, Madhva says that the world is similar to a dream, not because the world will be sublated when knowledge dawns upon us, but because the world is presented to the consciousness of Viṣṇu.<sup>65</sup> A little further Madhva writes, the world is called '*māyāmaya*' because it is produced by the knowledge of Viṣṇu.<sup>66</sup> Jayatīrtha too explains the passage by saying that the world is produced by the knowledge of Viṣṇu.<sup>67</sup> These texts of Madhva and Jayatīrtha do not intend to teach that Viṣṇu's knowledge is really creative, but that his true knowledge arranges and orders all beings and that Viṣṇu always sees the entire universe. According to *Dvaita* during the time of *pralaya*, the eternal vedic *varṇas* form the object of Viṣṇu's consciousness. The basic tenet of *Dvaita* that all consciousness is relational (related to an object) forces the Mādhvas to affirm that the Lord's consciousness would be empty if at the time of the disappearance of the world and of all things, the vedic *varṇas* did not remain as its object.<sup>68</sup> This doctrine is a clear proof that Viṣṇu's consciousness though infinite and eternal has still the same essential structure as all other consciousness.

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64. Cf. Chap. V. p. 154ff.

65. VTV. no. 262 sarvajñasya yato Viṣṇoḥ sarvadaitat pratiyate

66. ibid. no. 263 prajñāvinirmitaṁ yasmād ato māyāmayam jagat

67. VTV Tī. p.213 māyayā bhagavatprajñayā nirmitatvān māyāmayam

68. AV. III. 4. 188 Cf. also the comments of Jayatīrtha on this verse.

In the Īsopaniṣad, there occurs the prayer of a dying person : "(My) breath (*vāyu*) to the immortal Wind; this body ends in ashes. O purpose (*kratu*) remember; the deed (*krata*) remember". The text can however, be translated differently, Deussen translates : 'Nun werde Hauch zum Winde dem Unsterblichen, und dieser Leib mag endigen in Asche ! Om ! O Geist gedenk des Werks, gedenk !'<sup>69</sup> Now, according to Madhva, he who has to remember the deed of a dying person is Viṣṇu (Madhva interprets "*kratu*" in the sense of Viṣṇu). What interests us here is the question whether Viṣṇu can really 'remember'; in other words, whether memory can be predicated of Viṣṇu. Both Madhva and Jayatīrtha say that Viṣṇu is essentially of the 'form of eternal knowledge' and that the word 'remember' in the case of Viṣṇu means only his intention to bless (the devotee).<sup>70</sup> As Jayatīrtha remarks memory is needed only when immediate actual knowledge is lacking.<sup>71</sup> Viṣṇu's knowledge is of the type of immediacy and he sees immediately everything.

We have said that Viṣṇu's knowledge is of the type of *pratyakṣa* (immediate knowledge). But we know that immediate knowledge arises through the contact of the senses with the objects. Now, if Viṣṇu's knowledge is of the type of *pratyakṣa* then Viṣṇu must have senses. This difficulty is answered by Madhva with the statement that Viṣṇu's senses are nothing but his essential nature.<sup>72</sup> So Viṣṇu's a faculty of knowledge is his own essential nature.

69. Īs up. 17

70. Īś. up. Bh. 17 bhaktānāṃ smaraṇaṃ Vityajñaptis-vārūpataḥ anugrahaṇmukhatvaṃ tu naivānyat kvacid iṣyate

71. Jayatīrtha on Īś. up. Bh. 17

Smaraṇaṃ hy anubhavanāśe tajjanyasamskārasahakṛtena manasā jāyate. Īsvaraś ca nityajñānasvarūpa iti tasya smaraṇāsambhavāt lakṣanāśrayaṇam iti

72. VTV. no. 81 akṣāṇi ca svarūpaṇi nityavijñānātmakāni ca Viṣṇoḥ.

**Viṣṇu is Bliss (ānanda)**

In the AV, Madhva writes : Viṣṇu is rightly called endless (infinite = *ananta*) because he is the fullness of bliss; because he is the plentitude of joy.<sup>73</sup> The infinitude of Viṣṇu (*anantitva*) is nothing but the infinitude of bliss. The idea of Viṣṇu's greatness, perfection, infinitude, supremacy etc., are expressed by such terms as '*māhātmya*', '*Pūrṇatva*', '*nihsīmatva*' etc.

Among the three upaniṣādic attributes of Brahman, namely, being, knowledge and bliss, bliss in particular seems to fascinate the mind of Madhva. In the '*ānandamayādhikaraṇa*'. it is first of all established that Viṣṇu alone is denoted by the word '*ānandamaya*'. No other being, Śrī included, can be referred to by the word, because of the repetition of the word Brahman (i. e. Viṣṇu for Madhva) in connection with '*ānandamaya*'. The suffix—*maya* which occurs in that word has many meanings. It can signify 'change', the function of presiding, or abundance (*prācurya*). According to Madhva, Brahman is called '*ānandamaya*' not because he is a modification of bliss, nor because he presides over bliss, but because he is the abundance of bliss.<sup>74</sup> He is perfect bliss. Madhva goes on to assert that the word '*pracura*' can signify the nature of a thing. When we for example, say that the sun is 'light abundant', we mean to affirm that the sun is of the nature of luminosity. So also in the present case what is affirmed by the word is that Viṣṇu is of the nature of bliss.<sup>75</sup> BS I. 3.8

73. AV. I. 1.197 anantatvaṃ sunirñitaṃ pūrṇānando hi nālpake

NS. parameśvaro 'nantaḥ pūrṇānandatvād iti Cf. also BSB I. 3. 9; Tāt. Dī. p. 116.

74. AV. I. 1. 179 prācuryārthaś ca mayataḥ sarve'tra pratipāditaḥ.

BSBh. I. 1. 13 vikāratmakatvāt tadabhimānitvāc ca yujyate prakṛtyādināṃ mayat śabdah, na tu paramātmana iti ma bhūt pracurānandatvād hy ānandamayah

75. ibid. I. 1.13.

Tāt. Dī. p. 60.



'*bhūmā samprasādat*...is interpreted to mean fullness of bliss. It is the characteristic of Viṣṇu alone to be bliss. All other beings from Śrī to the blade of grass enjoy only a drop of bliss.<sup>76</sup>

Viṣṇu is called at once 'bliss' and the 'blissful' as we speak of a snake as having coils or simply as coils; or as we speak of the one universal time as past or present time or simply as time.<sup>77</sup> We can therefore, say either that 'Viṣṇu is bliss' or that Viṣṇu has bliss.

The absoluteness of Viṣṇu's bliss and its difference from the bliss of finite beings are explained in great detail by Madhva. Madhva admits a gradation in bliss, which finds its highest peak in Viṣṇu.<sup>78</sup> A careful reading of Madhv's texts will convince us that in and through all the quantitative expressions he uses, he is at pains to show that Viṣṇu's bliss is qualitatively different from the bliss of other beings.

The overflowing bliss of Viṣṇu is the root of Viṣṇu's activity 'ad extra'.<sup>79</sup> As Madhva says Viṣṇu does not act in order to get rid of sorrow or to acquire something. Nor is his activity the result of any excess of pain as the cries of a man in intense pain. The excess of his bliss and nothing else is the root of all his actions.

Sometimes in the sacred texts anger is attributed to Viṣṇu. His anger against Hiranyakāśyapu is well known in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas. But we know that anger etc as they exist in us men are defects. So they cannot be predicated of the all perfect Lord. The anger therefore, of which the vaiṣṇava

76. BSBh, I. 2. 15.

77. BSBh. III. 2. 29 also Tat. D. p. 339.

78. Kath. Up. Bh. V. 13; Cha. up. Bh. VII. 14,

79. BSBh. I. 1. 13-14.

AV. I. 1. 184 The reason of this world lies in the "mahānanda" of Viṣṇu.

ibid. 185-186 with the comments of Jayatīrtha (S, Siauue, Les Noms Vediques p. 58).

tradition speaks is not real anger but a sentiment that is opposed to what is evil and is of the nature of spirit (cit) and joy (ānanda) In fact this form of 'anger' confers felicity on the one, on whom it is exercised as we see in the case of Hiraṇyakaśyapu.

### **Viṣṇu's Lordship (aiśvarya)**

*Aiśvarya* means lordship. In the *Pāñcarātra* system it is this quality of Viṣṇu which enables him to produce the world independently of all other causes. In Madhva, this attribute gets a new nuance, though the above idea is not denied. Lordship is that attribute of Viṣṇu which harmonises those qualities in his person, which to us appear as opposed to one another.<sup>80</sup> It is for example, said that Viṣṇu is at once 'a whole' (a unity) and members; Viṣṇu is at once far and near; he is both minute and great. These attributes find their harmony in Viṣṇu, owing to his lordship. In him they are not opposed to one another.

As Trivikrama writes : 'though the mutual opposition of these qualities is known to us through valid means of know-

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80. O. Schrader, "The guṇa aiśvarya is that activity based on independence; unimpeded activity. According to Lakṣmi-Tantra, this is identical with what is called 'icchā'—will" (Op Cit. P. 33) Viṣṇu-Purāṇa also speaks of the 'aiśvarya' of Viṣṇu. Cf. P. Hacker, Prahlāda. Vol. I. p. 83).

BSBh. I. 1. 15 Madhva explains what he means by "aiśvarya" Tat. Di. p. 61.

That Madhva has taken over this idea from the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa and the Pāñcarātras, is clear from the texts he cites : "Schon die bisher betrachteten Praedikate des Gottes widersprechen sich gegenseitig. Diese Paradoxien sind ein Ausdruck für seine Unbegreiflichkeit. Auch dadurch, dass er "weltgestaltig" ist, wird er nicht greifbar, sondern bleibt 'para' und 'vyatirikta', der Andere. und der, der über alles "hinaustragt". Dem Gotte paradoxe Attribute beilegen, bedeutet in der Religion unseres Textes, ihn als den über alles Denkbare Erhabene anerkennen, ist also eine intensive Form der Anbetung". (P. Hacker Prahlāda.... Vol. I. p. 86) (Cf. ibid. pp. 86-87).

ledge (*pramāṇa*) and though they are seen to be opposed to one another in the world of experience, still when we predicate them of God, we have not to think of them as mutually exclusive.<sup>81</sup> The implicit reason for such a statement is that Īśvara is beyond our logic and hence it would be an illegitimate extrapolation if we apply our logical categories to him. Because of his lordship, Viṣṇu is of the nature of opposing qualities. As the Kath Up Bh. says, the lordship of Viṣṇu enables him to be at once unchangeable and active.<sup>82</sup> Because the Advaitin does not understand the lordship of Viṣṇu, he onesidedly keeps the unchangeability of Brahman and rejects the real activity of the Absolute Being. In Lord Brahman, there is no opposition (i. e., nothing is impossible in and to him).<sup>83</sup> The harmonisation of opposites in Viṣṇu is not the result of his yogic power, but of his lordship.

Jayatīrtha brings out the significance of this attribute for the work of creation. It is the lordship of Viṣṇu which enables him to freely make use of different instruments or means in his work of producing the world.<sup>84</sup> Viṣṇu has absolute lordship over things.

The lordship of Viṣṇu is connected with his attributes of omnipotence and unthinkable power (*sarvaśaktimān*, *acintyaśaktimān*).<sup>85</sup> Viṣṇu possesses all wonderful powers (*vicitraśaktimān*). The power which enables Viṣṇu to produce the world is not something different from his essence. His power is his essential nature. Along with these attributes we must mention also the attribute of '*bala*' which makes it possible

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81. Tat. Dī. p. 119 yady apiloke 'tisthūlatvātyaṇutvādyo dhārmā ekaṭra viruddhāḥ tathā' pi Viṣṇor aiśvaryād upapadyante.

BSBh. I. 3. 12 Viṣṇu is of the nature of opposing qualities.

82. Kath. Up. Bh. p. 15 aiśvaryād bhagavān Viṣṇor viruddham ghaṭayaty asau....

for Viṣṇu to produce the world without suffering any fatigue,<sup>86</sup>

### Viṣṇu is Eternal (nitya) and Omnipresent (sarvagata)

That Viṣṇu is beginningless and endless needs no explanation here. What interests us here is the way Madhva distinguishes the eternity of Viṣṇu from the eternity of other beings. In the Kaṭh Up Bh. Madhva distinguishes 'anāditva' from 'amṛtatva'. The world is said to be eternal like an ever flowing stream (*anādi pravāhataḥ*) whereas Viṣṇu is said to be deathless (*amṛta*).<sup>87</sup> In the same text, Madhva says that Viṣṇu alone is primarily deathless. Madhva and his two commentators distinguish between eternity in its primary sense and eternity in its secondary sense (*mukhyataḥ* and *upacāreṇa*). Only Viṣṇu is primarily eternal; the other beings are eternal in a secondary sense. In the BSBh we come across a text which says that Viṣṇu is 'beyond eternity'.<sup>88</sup>

83. Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 23-25 with Jayatīrtha's Prameya Dīpikā: tvayiśvare brahmaṇi na viruddhyate.

84. Pra. Dī on Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 23-25 Tat. Pr. on BSBh. II. 1. 19.

85. BSBh. II. 1. 29 sarvair yukta śaktibhiḥ. In the Pañcarātras—'śakti' is that potency of Viṣṇu to become the material cause of the world'. It is also the capacity to accomplish the unaccomplished (O. Schrader, Op. Cit. p. 33).

86. In Mādhvism Viṣṇu is not the material cause of the world. In the Pañcarātras 'bala' is that attribute of Viṣṇu, which enables him to produce the world without fatigue. (O. Schrader, Op. Cit. p. 33).

87. Kath. up. Bh. p. 19 pravāhataḥ tvanādiḥ mukhyatas tv amṛto Hariḥ mukhyāmṛtaḥ sa evaiko, jagan nityam pravāhataḥ Br. Ā. up. Bh. IV, 4. 25.

88. Pra. Dī. Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 12 Viṣṇu alone is really 'nitya' jīva is 'upacāreṇa' nitya BSBh. II. 3. 1-7. Viṣṇu is said to be beyond "nityatva" Viṣṇu is the support of the "nityatva" of other beings. Tat. Dī. p. 229.

What Madhva means by all these statements is that Viṣṇu's persistence in existence is something different from the persistence in existence of other beings. Viṣṇu's eternity is his beginningless and endless unchangeability.

Viṣṇu is omnipresent in one and the same form, just as the same sun is present in many objects.<sup>89</sup> This is possible because of the lordship of Viṣṇu. He is the indwelling ruler in all beings and the principal agent of the activities of all finite beings. Viṣṇu is present even in the deepest hell, though he, by no means suffers any pain there.<sup>90</sup> Viṣṇu is present in all beings and all beings are in him.<sup>91</sup>

### Viṣṇu is Independent (svatantra)

In Dvaita-Vedānta Viṣṇu is the abode of all auspicious qualities. But is there in him an attribute which is at once the root and focussing point of all other attributes? Which attribute of Viṣṇu in the ultimate analysis, sets him apart from other beings? In answering this question, we in fact touch on one of the central points of the mādḥva concept of God, The most divine of all divine attributes, thinks Madhva is the independence of God. It is the root and focussing point of all the divine perfections.

From the history of Hindu thought we know that the Śaivites, especially those of the *Pāṣupata* school defended with great vigour the independence of Śiva centuries before

89. BSBh. II. 3. 22, 23; Viṣṇu is present in the hearts of all beings. BSBh. I. 2. 6-7.

90. BSBh. III. 1. 17 Viṣṇu is present in svarga, bhūme, narake and andhe tamasi etc.

91. P. Hacker, Prahlāda....Vol. I. p. 84 ff. "Viṣṇu ist alles; Alles ist in Viṣṇu".

Bh. Gi. Bh. IX. 29 mayi te teṣu cāpyaham

Kath. up. Bh. p. 14 Viṣṇu is 'sarvasyālaṃbanam'

Bh. Gi. Bh. VI. 29-30.

Is. up. Bh. 1 and 6 sarvagaṃ parāmātmānaṃ sarvaṃ ca paramātmāni.



Madhva.<sup>92</sup> But how far the mādharma doctrine of independence was influenced by the teaching of his śaivite predecessors cannot be determined from the textual evidence available to us. Though Madhva and his commentators often use the terms, '*svatantra*', '*asvatantra*' and '*svātantrya*', they do not offer us any detailed explanations of these terms. Hence, we have to rely on the few scattered remarks of Madhva and Jayatīrtha on our present topic and extract from them a more or less consistent view of the Dvaita notions of 'independence' and 'dependence'.

In this '*Tattvasaṅkhyāna*' Madhva states that realities fall into two groups : independent and dependent. The only independent reality in Viṣṇu; all other realities are dependent.<sup>93</sup> Jayatīrtha while commenting on this passage writes: "Independence is the non-dependence of a being on another as regards its essential nature (*svarūpa*), knowledge (*pramiti*) and activity (*pravṛtti*)."<sup>94</sup> In the commentary on Madhva's Viṣṇutattvavinirṇaya, Jayatīrtha is more positive. "That being which in its existence (*sattā*), activity (*pravṛtti*) and knowledge (*pramiti*) is self-dependent is independent."<sup>95</sup> The exact meaning of the word '*sattā*' in Madhva's writing is not clear. Accepting the usual meaning, existence or reality, we can say that according to Dvaita-Vedānta the existence or reality of Viṣṇu is not from another but from himself, Jayatīrtha however, remarks that, '*sattā*' can be conceived in three ways : (a) '*sattā*' can mean a real essence or nature (*svarūpa*); (b) it can signify the fitness of reality to be known

92. On the Pāśupata doctrine of Śiva's independence and the dependence of all other beings on him. Cf. *Schultz, F. A.* 'Die philosophisch-theologischen Lehren des Pāśupatasystems'. Also *Frauwallner, E.* *Aus der Phil. der śivaitischen Systeme* esp. p. 28 and p. 38.

93. *TS.* Dvividhaṁ tattvam iṣyate, svatantraṁ asvatantraṁ ca iti, Viṣṇuh....

94. *Ts. Tī.* Svarūpapramitipravṛtti lakṣaṇasattraividhye parānapekṣaṁ.

95. *VTV.* Tī sattāpratītipravṛttiṣu svādhīnatvam.

(*prāmāṇyayogyā*) and finally (c) the fact of effective activity (*arthakriyattva*). So, when Viṣṇu is said to be independent in his '*sattā*', it means that his nature, his knowability and his activity are from him alone.<sup>96</sup> *Sattā*, may also mean that attribute of a manifest being, that distinguishes it from its earlier unmanifest state. That however, does not seem to be the sense in which the term is used in the present context.<sup>97</sup> Still it is to be remarked that Viṣṇu does not originate; he does not pass from an unmanifest state to a manifest form. Independence moreover, implies that the actuating force of Viṣṇu's activity and knowledge is to be sought in himself alone and not outside of him. In short Viṣṇu does not depend on another; he is fully autonomous.<sup>98</sup>

Independence goes hand in hand with spontaneity and self-determination. "The knowers of the sacred lore know that independence is indeed the following of one's own will or desire (*icchā*)."<sup>99</sup> '*Ichchā*' is in fact related to knowledge. "It is knowledge that produces desire."<sup>100</sup> So the will or desire of an independent being is not blind. Madhva says :

96. S. Siauue; La Doctrine de Madhva, p. 295.

97. Madhva has not given us a definition of *sat*. However, from the way he defines *asat* as that counter entity which has never existed nor will exist, we may legitimately conclude that for him *sattā* is that which can not be denied in the past, present, or future. '*Sattā*' is existence. Madhva distinguishes between eternal and non eternal *sattā*.

98. Bhg. T. XI. 24, 17 *pāramāthrikasatyatvaṃ svātantryaṃ abhidhiyate tad viṣṇor eva nānyasya tad anyeṣaṃ sadāstitā*. Since the highest form of reality is independence itself, independence is not a mode added to reality. Independence itself is that reality of Viṣṇu.

99. AV. II. 2, 20 *Svecchānuseritam eva svātantryaṃ....*

100. NS. to II. 2. 20 *jñānam eva hīcchā janakam ityarthah*.

101. *Cetanatvaṃ svatantram syāt sa caiko viṣṇuh*—text from AV quoted in The Phil. of Sri Madhvācārya p. 88 by Sarma B. N. K.

“To be spiritual is to be independent.”<sup>101</sup> The explanation of Jayatīrtha is that only in a being endowed with consciousness can there be ‘icchā’. Dvaita-Vedānta therefore, accepts the position that independence and knowledge, or freedom and consciousness are intimately connected. Thus for the Dvaitins, Viṣṇu alone possesses himself totally, knows and acts fully from himself. Independence is the very nature of Viṣṇu, marking him off from all other beings.<sup>102</sup> He alone is ‘a se’.

The independence of Viṣṇu is the root of his defectlessness and perfections. “An independent being is not touched by defects, for it is independent” writes Madhva.<sup>103</sup> A dependent being is incapable of acquiring all that it desires or of avoiding all that it dislikes. Since Viṣṇu is absolutely free, i. e., since no other being is equal or superior to him, no harm can come to him. Thus for example, though Viṣṇu is present in hell, yet he is untouched by suffering because of his independence.<sup>104</sup> In the words of Jayatīrtha : “The Lord is the fullness of all perfections and far removed from all defects, for he is free,”<sup>105</sup>

The numberlessness and the plenitude of Viṣṇu’s perfections spring from his ‘aseity’ and from the consequent autonomy of his actions and knowledge. Viṣṇu is the limitless ocean of being, bliss and knowledge, he is all powerful, possessing varied and mysterious powers, he is the author of all, superior to all and marvellous (*adbhuta*) because the principle of limitlessness and infinitude, *svātantrya*, is his very nature. The perfections seen in this world are all under the law of limitation and hence unworthy to be compared with

102. AV III. 3, 83 svatantraṁśadā tasya tasya bhedaś ca sarvataḥ.

103. Kāth. Up. Bh. p. 18 svatantratvāt svatantra hi naiva lipyata iti.

104. BSBh. III. 1, 17.

105. NS. II. 1. 115 Īśvaraḥ sakalaguṇapūrṇaḥ sarvadoṣa-dūraś ca, svatantratvāt.

the perfections of Viṣṇu.<sup>106</sup> Dependence stands for finitude, limitation; independence on the other hand means infinitude.

**Attributes : the Problem of Difference and Similarity and the Question of Predication.**

Śruti and reasoning based on śruti declare then that Viṣṇu is endowed with all good qualities. But we know that the souls too are beings, endowed with attributes. The souls possess being, knowledge and bliss. Madhva sometimes says that the soul is being and bliss by nature. Is there any similarity between the attributes of Viṣṇu and those of other beings ?

As we have already suggested above, Madhva is always anxious to point out the difference between Viṣṇu and his attributes, on the one hand, and on the other all other beings and their attributes. By means of numerical and quantitative expressions Madhva tries to point out, for example, the absoluteness of Viṣṇu's bliss. The Chand. Up says that the knowledge of the soul is one thing and the knowledge of Brahman a different thing.<sup>107</sup> The Br. Ā Up declares that all other beings live by a drop of the bliss of Brahman.<sup>108</sup> So, the knowledge, bliss etc., of Viṣṇu are far superior to (*para*) and different from the knowledge, bliss etc., of other beings.

The transcendence of Viṣṇu's attributes is based on the fact that they form the support, the sustaining and regulating source of the attributes of all creatures.<sup>109</sup> The limitless

106. Muṇ Up, Bh. 1.

107. Cha. up. VIII. 4. 1 Also other texts which declare the difference of Viṣṇu from other beings.

108. Br. Ā. up. VI. 3. 32.

109. Tat. Dī. p. 339 ādhāratvāmitatvopajīvyatvanīyamaktvāṇaṁ vyapadeśāt nityānandāvyayaṁ pūrṇaṁ para-jñānaṁ vidhiyata ity ādhikyena vailakṣaṇyavyapadeśāt sarvasmād uttamam eva brahmānandādikaṁ

BSBh. III. 2. 33 Viṣṇu's attributes are invisible.

attributes of Viṣṇu are invisible, whereas the qualities of creatures are perceptible.

But this way of looking at the attributes of Viṣṇu and of creatures immediately raises an objection. The bliss of Viṣṇu and the bliss we experience are designated by the same word 'ānanda'. It would be illegitimate to designate these two realities by the same term, if there was no similarity between them. Jayatīrtha answers this objection by stating that we are justified in designating the bliss of Viṣṇu and the bliss of creatures by the same term 'ānanda' because between them there exists the relation of the reflected object to its reflection. Though Viṣṇu's bliss is other worldly and ours this worldly, still there exists some similarity between the two. "The wisdom etc., of the Lord are none of the world; they are spoken of in the same terms to assist the understanding of the world, as in the familiar example : as the king of men is in this world, so is the king of the gods in heaven."<sup>110</sup>

### **The Inner Unity and Simplicity of Viṣṇu and the Multiplicity of His Attributes.**

An important point which we must touch upon here is the relation of Viṣṇu to his attributes. When we say that Viṣṇu is an ocean of attributes or that he possesses all auspicious qualities, we get the impression that the Absolute Being is a 'collection of qualities' or that Viṣṇu and his attributes constitute only a 'substance-accident' unity. Such a view of Viṣṇu destroys the inner unity and simplicity of God. Madhva was quite aware of this problem, though he has not formulated it

110. *ibid.* III. 2. 34 The Lord's attributes are spoken of by words that have obtained usage in the world. Tat. Di. p. 340 *evam atyanta vilakṣaṇo brāhmanandādir ānukūlyādīlakṣaṇanetaṛānandādisaḍṛṣa ānandadīr ucyate. ibid.* p. 399-340. The problem of *bimbarpra-tibimbabhāvaḥ* Tat. pr. on III. 2. 34.

BSBh. III. 2. 34 *alaukiko' pi jñānādis tac chadbair eva bhanyate jñāpanārthāya lokasya yathā rājeva devarāḍ iti* Cf. also AV. III. 2. 211 ff.



thus. Madhva's solution of this problem of the inner nature of God is based on his metaphysical and epistemological principles which we have explained in our first chapter.

Madhva most vehemently rejects any inner, real distinction between Viṣṇu and his attributes or any real distinction among the attributes themselves.<sup>111</sup> Any one who so conceives Viṣṇu is threatened with hell. Also, any one who teaches 'difference and non-difference' (*bhedābheda*) on this point will have the same fate.<sup>112</sup> It is therefore quite clear that Madhva, inspite of his insistence on the attributes of Viṣṇu, is not prepared to impair in the least the unity and simplicity of Viṣṇu. In the VTV, Madhva quotes approvingly the *Paramopaniṣad* which says that the actions, attributes etc., of Viṣṇu are his own essential nature and nothing else.<sup>113</sup> There is no distinction whatever among them or between them and the essential nature of Viṣṇu.

Madhva tries to understand and express this difficult point by means of a comparison. Just as substantiality is in the substance without introducing any inner division into the substance, so are attributes in a substantial nature.<sup>114</sup> Though the *Viśeṣas* do not introduce any real separation or division in the substance, still by virtue of the *viśeṣas*, the language of difference is made possible.<sup>115</sup>

The ontological principles governing the relation of substance and attributes have already been explained in the first chapter. Those principles are applicable to all beings. What is specific to Viṣṇu, however, is the fact that he, though endowed with numberless attributes, is yet said to be without any inner difference or distinction.

111. Kāth. up. Bh. p. 17.

112. VTV. no 459.

113. *ibid.* no. 457 *guṇa-kriyādayo Viṣṇoḥ svarūpaṃ nānyad iṣyate.*

114. *ibid.* no. 457 *svarupe 'pi viśeṣo' sti svarūpatvavad eva*

115. *ibid.* no. 457 *bhedābhave' pi tenaiva vyavahāraś ca sarvata iti*

The Advaitin tries to reach divine simplicity and unity by means of a 'via negativa', which relegates all multiplicity and specification to the sphere of illusion. To Madhva's mind such a procedure is at once an error and a sacrilege, for it reduces the All Perfect to the level of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Madhva is at pains to tell us that Viṣṇu is one and simple; yet the unity and simplicity of the self-luminous Absolute find their dynamic expression in diversity. Unity and simplicity, self-luminosity and independence do not do away with attributes; on the contrary they demand innumerable attributes. Because Viṣṇu is the absolutely independent Lord, his infinite specifications form but one harmonious unity. Each attribute in Viṣṇu is related to him by the relation of qualified non-difference (*saviśeṣābheda*), each has for essence all the others, and each of them possesses the divine infinitude.<sup>116</sup> It may not be wrong to say that the divine independence (*svātantrya*) is the source of all other divine *viśeṣas* and that it penetrates all of them, gives them infinitude and supreme efficacy and binds them all into the profound unity of the divine substance.

### III

#### The Manifestations of Viṣṇu (Vyūhas and Avatāras)

"Madhva includes among the authorities enumerated by him in support of his system the *Pāñcarāta Saṃhitās*; but it will be seen from the account given above that in his creed there is no place for the *Vyūhas*, *Vāsudeva* and others, and the name by which the Supreme Spirit is spoken of is mostly Viṣṇu."<sup>117</sup> This statement of Dr. Bhandarkar is not entirely correct because the *Vyūhas* do have a place in Madhva's system. It must, however, be admitted that the *Vyūhas* do not occupy that central place in the thought of Madhva, which they have in the *Pāñcarātras*.

116. S. Siauva, *La Voie vers la Connaissance de Dieu*, pp. 4-5

117. R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, p. 62

Von Glasenapp discusses the subject of the 'manifestations of Viṣṇu in some detail, and brings together quite a number of relevant texts from the different works of Madhva.<sup>118</sup> We shall therefore, try to avoid all unnecessary repetitions and concentrate our attention on the philosophical and theological aspects of the subject under study.

### Vyūhas<sup>119</sup>

"The *Vyūhas* in the *Pañcarātras* are emanations of Viṣṇu; each succeeding emanation, except the first, originating from an anterior emanation, like one flame proceeding from another flame."<sup>120</sup> Each *Vyūha* is Viṣṇu himself with all six attributes, knowledge (*jñāna*), lordship (*aīśvarya*), ability (*śakti*), strength (*bala*), virility (*vīrya*), splendour (*tejas*). Of these six qualities only two become manifest in each of the four *Vyūhas*. The *Vyūhas* are named *Vāsudeva*, *Samkarṣaṇa*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha*. Each *Vyūha* has a creative and a moral activity. The real creative activity of the *Vyūha* begins only with the second *Vyūha*: *Samkarṣaṇa*. He with the aid of the qualities of strength and knowledge carries the world in its germinal state in himself. *Pradyumna* is the cause of the appearance of spirit and matter, and finally, *Aniruddha* is the cause of the growth of body and soul. He causes the evolution of manifest matter, time etc. The ethical functions of the *Vyūhas* are thus described by Schrader: *Samkarṣaṇa* teaches the 'salvific science' (*śāstra*) i.e., monotheism (*ekāntika-mārga*); *Pradyumna* enables the translation of the doctrine into practice (*tat-kriyā*); and finally *Aniruddha* is the one presiding over the fruits of this practice.

Madhva in his AV speaks of the 'one Lord *Nārāyaṇa*, who exists in four forms in and through the forms of *Vāsudeva*

118. H. Von Glasenapp, Op. Cit. pp. 34-39

119. What we offer here is a short and simplified summary of the complicated Vyūha theory of the *Pañcarātra Samhitās* as explained by O. Schrader, Op. Cit. p. 34 ff.

120. O. Schrader. Op. Cit. p. 35

etc.<sup>121</sup> But a quotation from the Bṛhat Samhita in the BSBh says that 'one and the same (Supreme Being) is spoken of in five different ways.'<sup>122</sup> In this quotation the *Vyūhas* are not called the forms of Viṣṇu, but the different parts of Viṣṇu's body. 'The head is Nārāyaṇa, the right arm is *Pradyumna* etc. Further on in the same work. Madhva introduces a citation from the Caturveda-Śikhā which states that Viṣṇu has a hundred forms, a thousand forms, innumerable forms.<sup>123</sup> In the Ch Up Bh, Madhva writes that Viṣṇu has five forms, seven forms, ten forms, twenty one forms.<sup>124</sup> From these few indications it is abundantly clear that it is useless to look for a definite teaching of Madhva on the number of *Vyūhas* and *Sub-Vyūhas*.

Again the functions of these *Vyūhas*. at least of the four principal ones, are not clearly defined by Madhva. In the Ch. Up. Bh<sup>125</sup> *Samkarṣaṇa* is called the 'destroyer' (*samhartā*); the origination of the world is attributed to *Pradyumna*; the title '*pratihartā*' (the remover of beings) is given to *Aniruddha*. Viṣṇu is said to dwell in the winds, in the waters etc., in his five *Vyūha*-forms.<sup>126</sup> The *Vyūhas* seem to have some relation to the various sacrifices. But it is impossible to find in the works of Madhva a clear and definite teaching on the functions of *Vyūhas*.

But three points concerning the *Vyūhas* which are clearly taught in the works of Madhva are : (1) The *Vyūhas* are only manifestations of Viṣṇu, or forms of the Absolute Being;

121. AV. I. 1. 10a eko Nārāyaṇo devo Vāsudevādirūpeṇa caturmūrtiḥ

122. BSBh. I. 1. 15 prokta eka tu pancadhā sa eko Nārāyaṇaḥ....

123. ibid, II. 3. 48

124. Ch. Up. Bh. II. 10

125. ibid. II. 2

126. ibid. II. IX. The cosmic functions  
ibid. II. 3-5 Viṣṇu in his five forms dwells in the waters, in the wind etc.

there are not four or five Viṣṇus but only one Viṣṇu, and this Viṣṇu appears in different forms. (2) All the various manifestations of Viṣṇu are equal to Viṣṇu in everything; there is no distinction between Viṣṇu and his manifestations. (3) The absolute Lordship of Viṣṇu makes it possible for him to appear in many forms though he remains the same in all the manifestations. Since these points are equally applicable to the *Avatāras* also, we shall discuss them in connection with the *mādhva* doctrine on *Avatāras*.

### The Avatāras ("Descents" of Viṣṇu)<sup>127</sup>

The *Vyūhas* are manifestations of Viṣṇu immediately concerned with the origination, support etc., of the world. They are Viṣṇu himself at work in the different cosmic tasks. The *Avatāras* are manifestations of Viṣṇu in human or animal forms. They appear from age to age in the world in order to perform some particular function or other. The classic

127. The *avatāra*-doctrine and the *avatāra*-myths existed and developed side by side and they have influenced each other. Unfortunately no one has made a thorough study of the origin and growth of the *avatāra*-doctrine though the myths connected with the various *avatāras* have received some attention from scholars.

P. Hacker in his article "Zur Entwicklung der *Avatāra*-lehre" (WZKSOA 1960, p. 47 ff.) has tried, by means of textual analysis, to trace the development of the *avatāra*-doctrine.

"The basis of this (*avatāra*) doctrine is Bh. Gī. IV. 6-9. The terms by which this text describes Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa's appearance in this world, are *janma*, *saṁbhavāmi* and *ātmānaṁ sṛjāmi*. The first of these can be used to express the idea of rebirth in metempsychosis. In fact, it may be said that one of the roots of the *avatāra*-doctrine is the belief in metempsychosis. However the fact is that Kṛṣṇa "creates himself" employing his *māyā* and using his *prakṛti*". (art. cit. p. 68)

The terms first used to denote these manifestations were '*rūpa*, *vāṇus*, *lanu* and then *prādurbhāva*'. (ibid. p. 68).



source on the Hindu *Avatāra* doctrine is to be found in the 4th Chap. of the Bhag. Gītā. Madhva's commentary on the 3 key verses of this chapter with the super-commentary of Jayatīrtha will furnish us with the main lines of Madhva's views on the *Avatāra* doctrine.

"Though unborn, though my self is eternal, though the Lord of beings; resorting to my own material nature I come into being by my own mysterious power. For, whenever of the right a languishing appears, Son of Bharata, a rising of unright I send myself forth. For the protection of the good and for the destruction of evil-doers. To make a firm footing for the right I come into being in age after age". Bh. Gītā IV. 6-8.<sup>128</sup>

Let us begin with the commentary on verses seven and eight. "There is no law which says that the work of protection etc., should be accomplished by Viṣṇu's birth."<sup>129</sup> These works can be done (by Viṣṇu) even without being born."<sup>130</sup> Then why is he born? 'Viṣṇu manifests himself out of play (*līlā*) and because his nature is such.' He always does his pleasure (or his will) out of play and because of his nature.<sup>131</sup> 'Jayatīrtha tells us that the 'play' of Viṣṇu is not intended to recreate himself from fatigue etc. He acts as he pleases.'<sup>132</sup>

The sufficient reason for Viṣṇu's act of manifesting himself must be sought in Viṣṇu himself and not outside him. He is infinitely powerful and hence, he can accomplish the function performed by the *Avatāras*, without taking upon himself the various manifestations. If he manifests himself, then his nature and the inner fullness of his nature alone can be the reason for his action.

128. Transl. F. Edgerton, p. 43

129. Bh. Gī. Bh. IV. 7-8 na janmenaiva paritrāṇādi kāryam iti niyamah

130. Pr. Dī. janmanā vināpi kartum samarthatvād iti bhāvah

131. Bh. Gī. Bh. IV 7-8 tathāpi līlayā svabhāvena ca yatheṣṭacārī

132. Pr. Dī. līlāpy ālasyaparihārādy arthā na bhavati

Viṣṇu manifests himself or is 'born' in order to protect the good and destroy the wicked. Viṣṇu wants to establish the tottering *dharma* once again on a firm footing.<sup>133</sup> The way this work is accomplished differs from one *avatāra* to another. The Buddha, who is considered as an *Avatāra* of Viṣṇu appeared among men to lead the enemies of the gods (*asuras*) into error through his teaching on *ahiṃsā*.<sup>134</sup> Rāma, another manifestation of Viṣṇu for example exhibited himself as suffering sorrow, ignorance and weariness in order to delude the *Asuras* and other wicked persons.<sup>135</sup> An *Avatāra* may have a teaching function, *Vyāsa* for example, an *Avatāra* of Viṣṇu, came down among men at the request of the gods to 'make the salvific science', which finds its aphoristic expression through Bādarāyana in B. Sūtras.<sup>136</sup> But, in his introduction to the Bh. Gī Bh. Madhva says that Viṣṇu in the form of *Vyāsa* came down on earth to re-reveal to the world the lost (forgotten, says. Jayatīrtha) salvific knowledge or righteousness. People were suffering in this transmigratory world because they did not possess the means to avoid what is bad (displeasing) and to acquire what is good (pleasing). The women and Śūdras, who have no access to the Vedas could not learn the salvific teaching. In order to help these people, *Vyāsa* composed the fifth Veda, namely, the Mahābhārata. Here Viṣṇu is called merciful (*dayālu*).

Finally, an *Avatāra* may have a cosmic function as is the case with the Tortoise or the Boar *Avatāras*.<sup>137</sup>

133. Bh. Gī. IV. 7

Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. Bh. IV. 7 *sādhuparitrāḍādikam bhagavadavatārasya prayojanam*.

134. VTV. Tī pp. 24-25

135. VTV Tī no. 456 "Still, for deluding the 'asuras' and others also sometimes, he exhibits sorrow, ignorance and weariness, though he is absolutely perfect. Vide also VTV. Tī p. 354

136. Bh. Gī. Bh. Introduction; AV. I. 1. 3; BSBh. I. 2. 1

137. on the various 'avatāras' and their functions. Cf. A. Danielou, *Le Polytheisme Hindou*. pp. 251-278. Also J. Gonda, *Aspects of Early Vaiṣṇaism*, p. 124 ff.

One point which is clear and yet needs to be insisted upon here is that for Madhva, the salvific action of the *Avatāras* does not consist in the saving of sinners and the wicked. The wicked and sinners are condemned, and it is in this condemnation or destruction of the wicked that the vindication of the eternal *dharma* is accomplished. Those who are protected and saved are the good and the good alone.

As regards the number of *Avatāras* in Mādhvism, nothing definite can be said. Madhva admits the traditional ten *Avatāras*, Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, the Buddha and finally Kalki. This number is not definitive because we find other lists in his other works.

Let us now try to explain three points referred to in the section on the *Vyūhas*, viz., the oneness of Viṣṇu and the multiplicity of the forms; the equality of the manifestations with Viṣṇu; and the Lordship of Viṣṇu which enables him to manifest himself in multiple ways without losing his personal identity.

"The Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Being, though one in himself is of many forms and is called by different names because of his Lordship."<sup>138</sup>

In the B. S. Bh, Madhva quotes the Caturveda Śikhā to the effect that all the forms of Viṣṇu are never born, they never die, they are not under the command of any (this is the divine attribute of independence itself) they have no bondage and liberation; all of them are perfect, ageless, absolute etc.<sup>139</sup> How can we attempt to understand this 'mystery'? Madhva tells us, that through the analogy of the sun and its light, we can understand Viṣṇu and his manifestation. One and the same sun is in the heavens and in the light (perhaps the rays which reach us here). In the same

138. BSBh. III. 2. 11

139. *ibid.* II. 3. 48

way, the same Viṣṇu, because of his absolute lordship and power, remaining the same takes on different forms.<sup>140</sup> The *Avatāras* and the *Vyūhas* do not introduce an inner division into the inner essential unity of Viṣṇu. So those forms of Viṣṇu by which the origination, support, dissolution and liberation are brought about are equal to Viṣṇu. The *Avatāras* Fish, Tortoise, Boar and others too are equal to Viṣṇu and not different from him.<sup>141</sup>

The Br Ā Up verse : 'That is fulness; fulness this. From fulness fulness doth proceed. Withdrawing fulness's fulness off, e'ven fulness then itself remains' (pūrṇam adah pūrṇam idam pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāviśiṣyate)<sup>142</sup> is used by Madhva to explain and substantiate his doctrine of Viṣṇu's manifestatsons. Trivikrama's explanation is very informative because it enables us to see the inner dynamism of the Supreme Being as conceived by the Mādhvas.<sup>143</sup> 'Pūrṇam adah is the original form, Viṣṇu; pūrṇam idam is the *Avatāra* form; between the two there is only a distinction of number,' 'The one (Viṣṇu) indeed becomes many because of the inner factor called *viśeṣa*. What Trivikrama does here is to explain the 'Viṣṇu. Avatāra relationship with the help of the general substance-attribute relationship. Just as the specialities or the inner factors of a being make multiple, non-synonymous predication regarding the same being possible, without the least violation of its inner unity; so the Lordship of Viṣṇu, enables him to appear as many though remaining the same.

140. BSBh. II. 3. 48

141. ibid. I. 1. 15 Aśvarya is said to be the reason, why Viṣṇu can be one in himself and multiple in his forms Cf. also Kath. up. Bh. p. 17  
BSBh. II. 3. 47-49 In these sūtras Madhva explains how the souls differ from the Avatāras.

142. Br. Ā. up. V. 1. 1

143. Tat. Di. p. 43 pūrṇam ado mūlarūpam pūrṇam idam avatārarūpam amuṣmād idam saṁkhyāmātreāa 'udacyate', udricyate ekam eva bahusāṁkhyākam bhavati, viśeṣād eva



There is no inferiority and superiority between *Avatāras*, arising from the circumstance of time and place. "But there is a distinction between them purely in the sphere manifestation."<sup>144</sup> This verse is not very clear and no commentary is available to help us to understand better the meaning of the statement. Perhaps we might interpret the verse in the following manner : Between Viṣṇu and his manifestations and among the manifestations themselves there is a distinction or difference in the order of 'manifestations'. The original from that is, Viṣṇu, and his manifestations are not exactly identical; nor are the Boar *Avatāra*, the Tortoise *Avatāra*, or Rāma and Kṛṣṇa identical among themselves, though the person manifested in and though all these forms remains the all perfect Viṣṇu.

What Madhva and his commentators are trying to explain by means of all these quotations and examples is the truth of the oneness of Viṣṇu and the inner power of Viṣṇu to take upon himself various forms. If we may be permitted to use foreign categories to explain the mind of Madhva then we may put the whole matter thus: between Viṣṇu and his manifestations there is not only equality in attributes, status etc., there is also the identity of the essential divine nature. But there is more to be said : There is personal identity between Viṣṇu and his manifestations. There is only one divine person Viṣṇu and he manifests himself according to the diversity of functions in different forms and 'shapes'. This truth for Madhva is necessary for liberation. If any one sees the least difference between Viṣṇu and his manifestations as regards attributes, nature etc., he goes into darkness after death.<sup>145</sup>

144. Br. A. up. Bh. V. 11 na deśakālasāmarthaiḥ parāvar-yam kathamcana parāparatvaṁ (or parāvaratvaṁ) teṣāṁ tu vyaktimātraviśeṣataḥ

145. Kath. up. Bh. yaḥ prādurbhāvago Viṣṇur dehādiṣu ca samsthitāḥ sa eva mūlarūpaḥ ca sakṣān Nārāyaṇabhi-dhāḥ mūlarūpaḥ ca yo Viṣṇuḥ paādurbhāvādigaḥ ca saṅ-guṇataḥ svarūpato vāpi viśeṣaṁ yo tra paśyati atya-lpam apī, mṛtvā sa tamo' ndham yāty asamsāyam bhedābhedavidaḥ cātra tamo yānti na samsāyaḥ



The essential and ultimate reason for the absolute difference of the *Avatāras* from the gods and the souls is to be found in the formers identity with Viṣṇu. It is true, that sometimes the *Avatāras* and the souls are spoken of as parts of Viṣṇu. But Madhva tells us that we must distinguish between part and part. There is an 'essential' part (*svāmśa*) and a distinct part (*vibhinnāmśa*). The '*svāmśa*' is in no way different from the whole.<sup>146</sup> 'What power and essential nature are in the whole, are also in the part.' As Trivikrama explains: 'the powers of the whole, such as the power of producing the world etc; the essential nature of the whole, such as knowledge and bliss, as they are in Viṣṇu, pervading (transcending) time and place, and the attributes as they are in Viṣṇu (*svāmśin*) are also to be found in the *svāmśa*'.<sup>147</sup> Perhaps we may say that the word '*amśa*' is used here "in a very secondary sense! Now, the *Avatāras* are the '*svāmśas*' of Viṣṇu.

The *Jīvas* (souls) on the other hand are the '*vibhinnāmśas*' of Viṣṇu, i.e., distinct parts with limited power and endowed with only a 'little similarity' to the Lord.

Even the gods are infinitely inferior to the manifestations of Viṣṇu. 'The manifestations have equality with Viṣṇu. but Brahmā, Rudra, Prajāpati, Bṛhaspati and the rest of the gods, Gandharvas, Men, Fathers, Asuras etc., are not equal to the Lord.'<sup>148</sup>

The great emphasis Madhva lays on the equality of the manifestations with Viṣṇu is a clear indication of his rejection of the so called 'partial manifestations of Viṣṇu (*amśāvatāras*). Though, Madhva sometimes speaks of *Avatāras* as *svāmśas* of

146. BSBh. II. 3. 47

147. Tat. Dī. p. 268 *amśino yat tu sāmāthyam jagatsṛṣṭyādan yatsvarūpam jñānānandāiyathā sthitiḥ deśatah kālato guṇto vyāptatvena tadeva svāmśasya*

148. BSBh. IV. 2. 13-84

Viṣṇu, we know that the term does not mean a part of Viṣṇu in the usual sense of the word.<sup>149</sup>

Let us now focus our attention on another aspect of the *Avatāra* doctrine which in no way is easy to deal with. Up to now we have seen that the *Avatāras* are manifestations of Viṣṇu in human or animal forms. The purpose of the *Avatāras* and their essential identity with Viṣṇu have also been explained. But there remains the question as to how we should understand the word 'manifestation.' As a matter of fact the Bh Gī speaks of the 'birth' of the absolute Being. What does Madhva understand by this word : 'the birth' of an *Avatāra* ?

Once again we must look into the Bh Gī Bh. in order to find a solution to our problem (Bh Gī Bh IV. 1). In verse 6, the verb 'to be born' (*jan*) does not occur; the verb used is 'to into being' (*sambhū*) which is interpreted by Jayatīrtha as 'to be born' (*jani*). The verb 'jan' occurs in the previous verse. Now, the problem which Madhva wants to solve in his commentary is : How can birth be predicated of Viṣṇu, who by nature is eternal and unborn ? His self and his body are eternal

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149. On the problem of partial *avatāras* of Viṣṇu etc. P. Hacker, Art. Cit, p. 50 ff. "Aus diesem Mythos ist für unser Untersuchung zunächst hervorzuheben, dass die Vorstellung bestand, ein Gott könne sein Selbst teilen und einen Teil desselben ins diesseits schicken, um geboren zu werden". (ibid. p. 51) *Aṃśāvatāra* is taught in the Purāṇas. Vide P. Hacker Prahlāda.... Vol I. p. 38, Vol. II. p. 190; and Rāmānuja too assimilated this traditional *aṃśāvatāra* theory into his system. Apart from these Manifestations of Viṣṇu, Rāmānuja accepts another type of Viṣṇu's *avatāra* namely, "*arcāvatāra*". This is the special indwelling of Viṣṇu in the consecrated idols. (Cf. O. Lacombe, L' Absolu selon le Vedānta, p. 327 ff.) Madhva's rejection of *aṃśāvatāra* has its roots in his view that Viṣṇu is absolutely indivisible.

and unchangeable. How can such a being be said to be born ?<sup>150</sup>

Viṣṇu is not really born; but he appears to be born. But this false appearance of birth has a reason. Kṛṣṇa (Vāsudeva—that is—the son of Vasudeva) appears to be born, because he ‘appears’ (*prādurbhāva*) (to the world) in and through Vasudeva. Vasudeva and others are born in accordance with the natural course of things. Viṣṇu has produced a material body for Vasudeva and others. Kṛṣṇa and other *Avatāras* make their appearance in the world in and through the family of Vasudeva and others. To the ignorant, Vāsudeva is just a child of Vasudeva, born in and from them just like any other child. In truth, however, Viṣṇu only appears in them. He is not born in or from them. It is Viṣṇu’s absolute power over matter which enables him to take on this appearance of birth without suffering any pain or sorrow.<sup>151</sup>

That Viṣṇu’s manifestation implies Viṣṇu’s entrance into a real material body seems to be taught in Kaṭh Up Bh. ‘He the great Viṣṇu lets himself be born in the form of Fish, Tortoise etc., by entering into (remaining in) the inner cave along with the other beings from age to age.’<sup>152</sup> This verse

150. Bh. Gī. IV. 5-6 *bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tavacārjuna tāny aham veda sarvāṇi na tvam vettha Paraṁ tapa ajo’pi san navyayātmā bhūtānām Īśvaro’pi san prakṛtiṁ svām adhisthāya sambhavāmy ātmamāyayā* Bh. Gī. Bh. IV. 6

Also Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. Bh. IR. 6 *svarūpato dehataś cānādinityasya sambhavāmi, iti janiḥ katham ucyate*

151. *ibid.* IV. 6 *prakṛtyā jāteṣu vasudevādiṣu tathaiva teṣām jāta iva pratiye*

Also Pr. Dī. Jayatīrtha speaks of the “janmabhrānti” since ‘prakṛti’ is fully under his sway Viṣṇu can take on the appearance of birth.

152. Kaṭh. up. Bh. p. 16 *matsyakūrmūdirūpeṇa guhāsamsam ajījanatbūtaiḥ saha mahā Viṣṇuḥ paramātmā yuge yuge. Into which inner cave does Viṣṇu in different forms enter ?*

is a quotation from an unknown source and hence we cannot take it seriously as an expression of Madhva's mind.

What we can definitely say on this point is that Viṣṇu is not really born i. e., the *Avatāra* does not imply the real birth of Viṣṇu. In speaking of Vāsudeva, birth is mistakenly predicated of Viṣṇu. Secondly, there is no inner relation between the *Avatāra* and the bodies of Vāsudeva and others. But the nature of the relation that exists between the two is by no means clear. Does the *Avatāra* imply Viṣṇu's entrance into a real body?

Madhva distinguishes between 'primary birth' (*mukhyotpatti*) and secondary birth (*amukhyotpatti*). Birth in the primary sense is the birth of a material body which is subject to suffering and death. Birth in the secondary sense is 'manifestation' (*prādurbhāva*). In the case of Viṣṇu, origination means just manifestation, birth in the secondary sense and nothing else. The body of Hari is unoriginated and eternal.<sup>153</sup> In the Brah. Purāṇa, Brahmā tells Nārada: 'Viṣṇu's body is not born from the union of man and woman. On the contrary, he manifests his own form which is faultless, and is consciousness and bliss.' This manifestation and nothing else is his birth.<sup>154</sup> In the AV, Madhva says; Viṣṇu's origination is of the nature of *Avatāra*.<sup>155</sup> Jayatirtha adds' it is not of the nature of gaining body etc.<sup>156</sup> A little later, Madhva says: Viṣṇu's birth is his manifestation through activity (*pravartakatvena*).<sup>157</sup> All these texts do not in any

153. VTV. p. 351 mukhyotpattis tadanyeṣām prādurbhāvo Harer janiḥ VTV, Tī. p. 351 f.

154. VTV. no. 157 śrīpūṇḍrīmalābhīyogātmā deho Viṣṇor na jāyate kintu nirdoṣacaitanyasukhaṃ nityaṃ svakāṃ tanum

155. AV. I. 1.177 Viṣṇor utpattir avatāraga

156. NS Avatāraga prādurbhāvaviṣayā, na tu śarirādilābhalakṣaṇā

157. AV. I. 1.207 kriyāpravartakatvena pradurbhāvo Harer janiḥ



way help us to understand better the nature of the *Avatāra*. The only thing they make clear is that Viṣṇu is not really born.

Since Viṣṇu is not really born, he has no body (material) and hence he cannot suffer. In the Brah. Purāṇa quoted by Madhva in VTV.<sup>158</sup> Nārada asks Brahmā : "How is it that in his *Avatāras* Viṣṇu seems to suffer anxiety, weariness, wounds, ignorance and sorrow? This doubt, oh ! Brahmā, has lodged itself in my heart like a dart." 'Brahmā replies : For deluding the Asuras (enemies of the gods) and others he sometimes exhibits himself as suffering sorrow, weariness and ignorance though he is absolutely perfect. How can there be wound etc? The unborn Hari exhibits them to render liberation difficult. Viṣṇu in his *Avatāras* must be understood as free from defects." This passage speaks for itself and does not call for any comment. In Madhva's system the 'avatāric exhibition' of sorrow and pain form part of the purpose of Viṣṇu's manifestation. The unworthy souls must be prevented from knowing the true nature of Viṣṇu and thus be excluded from liberation. This is the real result achieved by the 'avatāric-exhibition' of sorrow etc., though in reality the *Avatāras* are above sorrow and suffering.

In the realistic system of Madhva, how can a real result be achieved by means of an 'appearance'? Madhva defends with great skill the reality of divine activity, yet in this one dominion of *Avatāras*, he seems to hold a 'sort of illusionism'. Somehow, between the realism of Madhva and his *Avatāra* doctrine there is a discrepancy, Neither the omnipotence of Viṣṇu nor the statement that Viṣṇu is absolutely independent can help us to overcome it.

The whole *Avatāra* doctrine of Madhva is very similar to the docetist theories of the early Christian Gnostics like Valentinian and Basilides. The birth, body and the sufferings of the *Avatāras* of Viṣṇu are relegated to the domain of 'appea-

158. VTV. p. 353 with VTV Ti. pp. 353-354



rance'. As a consequence of this docetism, Madhva's *Avatāra* doctrine is 'monophysitic'. In the *Avatāras*, there is only one nature i. e., the divine nature and it in no way comes into contact with what we really are. The gulf between 'what we are' and 'what God is' is not bridged by God in his *Avatāras*.

Viṣṇu in himself is invisible to our senses; but he can be seen by us in his manifestations. The Yogin who sees the manifestations with his eye of knowledge gets liberation: the seeing of the manifestations with one's ordinary sense is not conducive to liberation. Here, Madhva teaches that the *Avatāra* forms of Viṣṇu are the objects of our sense knowledge though Viṣṇu himself who is in the *Avatāras* can be apprehended only with the 'eye of knowledge'.<sup>159</sup>

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159. Kath. up. Bh. p. 20 prādurbhāvān ṛte Viṣṇum indriyair naiva paśyati prādurbhāvān api yadā jñānadṛṣṭyaivapaśyati tadaiva mucyate yogi na dṛṣṭair indriyaiḥ kvacit.

In Rāmānjan the love of Viṣṇu for his 'devotees' (Śrī Bh. II. 2.41) is the predominant motive of Viṣṇu in his Descents. In and through his *Avatāras*, the Supreme Lord makes himself accessible to his creatures.

Madhva in his writings presents a rather stern picture of Viṣṇu. In his Bh. Gi. Bh., Madhva writes that the merciful Viṣṇu (dayālu) came down into our midst as Vyāsa. Besides this short reference to Viṣṇu's mercy, I have not found other texts which in all clarity speak of Viṣṇu's love and mercy, and which ascribe the *avatāras* to Viṣṇu's desire to make himself accessible to us weak and sinful men.

Apart from the Vyūhas and *Avatāras*, Madhva admits also Viṣṇu's vibhūti or vibhāvas (i. e. Viṣṇu's special presence in certain persons and things; a presence which confers on them greater effulgence and power). For details, cf. H. Von Glasenapp. Op. Cit. p. 38 ff. Also Bh. Gi. Bh. IX,

## CHAPTER IV

# VIṢṆU AND THE UNIVERSE

### I

#### Viṣṇu and the Origination of the World

It has been our intention till now to show how Madhva conceives God in himself, i. e., the inner reality of Viṣṇu. Since Viṣṇu is the eternal Lord of the eternal realities, viz., the souls (*jīva*) and primary matter (*prakṛti*) and since Madhva often speaks of Viṣṇu in function of or in relation to this world, it has not always been possible to describe the inner life of Viṣṇu without at the same time referring to the universe. Viṣṇu's *śarvanīmatī* (the doctrine which teaches that Viṣṇu is the primary purport of every word), his attributes, his manifestations etc., can be understood only in relation to the universe. Our present task is to define Viṣṇu more exactly and in greater detail, in as much as he is the cause of the 'production', (origination) 'sustenance' and 'destruction' of the universe. What does Madhva mean when he says that Viṣṇu is the Creator (*śraṣṭā*) of the universe? How does he conceive the sustenance (*sthiti*) and destruction *saṃhāra* of the universe?

This same subject could be looked at from a different angle: from the angle of the problem of the 'One' and the 'Many'. The problem of 'the One and the Many' is at once an 'intra-divine' and an 'extra-divine' problem. We have seen in the last chapter how Madhva faced this problem at the 'intra-divine' level. Viṣṇu is one, 'a unity in being', yet he is at the same time an ocean of attributes; he is one, yet he has a body; he is one, yet he has different forms and manifestations.

We have now to turn to the same problem at the 'extra-divine' level. Viṣṇu is the Absolute Being, yet he is not the only being, the only '*tattva*'. The souls and primary matter, their coming together and their development are real. In Madhva's terminology 'the *Tattva*' and 'the *tattvas*' exist. How does Madhva conceive their inter-relationship? Since Madhva rejects both the monistic position which accepts only one reality and relegates the many to the sphere of illusion and the materialistic position which accepts only the many and rejects the 'One', it is all the more interesting for us to see how he deals with this problem. In the history of Indian thought Madhva is the most radical and the most articulate of the thinkers who fight for the reality of God and of the world. The way he tries to save the One and the Many, (though remaining faithful to the Vedāntic tradition and using traditional concepts) shows us just how far Indian thought can go on this point. So this part is very important for the understanding and evaluation of Madhva's thought.

Following the vedānta tradition, Madhva affirms that Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu alone is the cause of the production, support and dissolution or destruction (*sṛṣṭi*, *sthiti* and *samhāra*) of the universe, for such is the teaching of the sacred tradition<sup>1</sup> The very first verse of the AV says: 'he from whom the origination etc., of the universe' are, is Viṣṇu.'<sup>2</sup> *Bādarāyana*'s assertion: 'he from whom the origination etc.,' clearly points to Viṣṇu as the cause of the universe.'<sup>3</sup> From Viṣṇu proceed 'origination, support, dissolution, government,

1. AV. I. 1. 90 *sṛṣṭiḥ sthitiś ca samhāro niyatir jñānam āvṛtiḥ bandhamokṣav api hy āsu srutiṣūktā Hareḥ sadā*

Cf. also BSBh. I. 1. 2

2. AV. I. 1. 1. *asyodbhavādidam...*

3. BS. I. 1. 2

BSBh. I. 1. 2

AV. I. 1. 89 *antaḥsamudragam viśvaprāsūteḥ*

knowledge, ignorance, bondage and finally release.' This is the definition of Viṣṇu. According to Madhva, innumerable Vedic passages reveal this truth.<sup>4</sup> What Madhva cannot understand, is how any one can deny this primary tenet of religion (*samaya*).

### 1. The Refutation of Rival Schools.

As is well known, every Indian scholastic thinker, before he establishes his position, tries to refute all the opposing schools of thought. Madhva is no exception to this rule. In the present exposition of Madhva's refutation of his opponents what interests us most is not the objectivity of Madhva's exposition of the other schools, but the philosophical and theological presuppositions on which his refutation is based.

#### (a) Atheistic) *nirīśvara*) Sāṃkhya.

This school does not deny the existence of gods of limited power, but holds that there is no Supreme God. It affirms that primary matter, which is devoid of consciousness and which is the combination of three qualities (*stattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*), of itself and by itself evolves into the 'shape' of the universe which possesses the character of pleasure and pain (*sukha* and *duḥkha*).<sup>5</sup>

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kāraṇaṃ tu yat janmādyasyeti lakṣyate

#### 4. BSBh. I. 1. 2

In his commentary on BS I. 1. 2. Madhva refers to Rg. V. X. 125. 1-8; *ibid.* I. 164

Tait. Up. III. 1 "That, verily, whence beings here are born, that by which when born they live, that into which on deceasing they enter" (Trans R. E. Hume, p. 290)

#### 5. BSBh. II. 2. 1 Introduction

Tat. Dī. pp. 194-5 *acetanaṃ svatantraṃ pradhānaṃ jagadākāraṇampariṇamate.*

E. Frauwallner, *Geschichte der Ind. Phil.*, Vol. I., p. 350 ff. : on how classical Sāṃkhya conceives the evolution of matter.

Madhva's refutation of atheistic Sāṃkhya depends on his proposition that an unconscious being is not capable of independent action, for we see only conscious beings acting independently.<sup>6</sup> The independent activity which is denied to non-conscious being (*acetana vastu*) is called 'formation' (*racanā*), i. e., an activity which results in a beautiful and variegated world.<sup>7</sup> But is self-directed activity outside the reach of non-conscious beings? Yes, claims Madhva. Such Sāṃkhya arguments like 'milk by itself turns into curd and waters flow', are worthless since we know from śruti that without the activity of Viṣṇu, none of these processes can take place.<sup>8</sup> Viewed from another angle, the Sāṃkhya position illegitimately subordinates spirit to matter (*puruṣa* to *prakṛti*).<sup>9</sup>

#### (b) Deistic (Seśvara) Sāṃkhya

This school accepts the existence of God (*Īśvara*). *Prakṛti* when favoured (*prasāda*) by Īśvara becomes capable of evolving into the universe, as when the earth favoured by rain brings forth by itself grass etc.<sup>10</sup> *Prakṛti*, therefore, is not an independent cause, it needs an initial (favour) (blessing) of God. But once this blessing or favour is there, then *prakṛti* is no more in need of the causal influx of the Absolute Being.

Such a view of divine causality is the result of an utter lack of the knowledge of Nārāyaṇa's relation to the world. The 'śruti texts' ascribe to Brahman not only an act of initial favouring when speaking of the origination of the world; they affirm that *prakṛti*'s very power of being the material cause

6. BSBh. II. 2. 1 acetanasy svataḥpravṛtṭy anupapatteḥ

7. Tat Di. p. 195 svatantra-pravṛtṭir hi racanā nāma;  
Cf. AV. II. 2. 19 ff sā ca vicitraviṣṭapaviṣayā....

AV II. 1. 72 Buddhipūrva pravṛtṭir hi kartṛtvam itī  
nīcitam....

8. BSBh. II. 2. 2. The sacred text which is referred to by Madhva is Br. Ā. Up. III. 8. 9.

9. BSBh. II. 2. 7-8

10. ibid. II. 2. 5 with Tat. Di. p. 198



(*upādāna-kārāṇa*) of the world is a gift of Viṣṇu. As Madhva says, the very being (*sattā*) of *prakṛti* is from Viṣṇu.<sup>11</sup> The causal influence of Viṣṇu on *prakṛti* does not therefore, stop with or principally consist in, an external act of 'favouring'; no, it touches the very intrinsic character of *prakṛti*, for, its material causality and its being (*upādānatava* and *sattā*) are dependent on Viṣṇu.<sup>12</sup> In short Viṣṇu is not not a mere contributory cause of the world (*anugrahakamātram*). He is the Supreme cause of the universe.

### (c) The Materialists

The Materialists accept the existence of earth, water, fire and air. Out of the combination of these elements the material world, bodies, the faculties of knowledge and even consciousness come into existence. They deny the existence of Īśvara and Śruti. The atoms of the various material elements and their different combinations and the agency of conscious beings which arise out of matter can explain the existence and activity of the world. The conscious bodies do possess self-directed activity. So even a sort of purpose may be seen in the world. Thus the materialists explain the world with no reference to God or to spiritual beings.<sup>13</sup>

According to Madhva, the materialist view of the origination of the universe is false. In fact Madhva refutes the

11. *ibid.* II. 2. 5. jagato 'bhāvāt tṛṇādīnaṃ parjanyaṇ nānugrahakatvamātram īśvarasya....prakṛtisattādipradatvaṃ cāṅgikṛtam

12. *Tat. Dī.* pp. 198.199 At the time of the 'production' of the world, the world is said to be "abhāva" non-existent. So it is Viṣṇu who gives to matter the power to become the material cause of the world. Cf. also the N. S. text quoted by B. N. K. Sharma : *The Brahma sūtras : Principal Commentaries* Vol. II. p. 15. Note 5.

BSBh. 1. 4. 27 prakṛtim anupraviśya, tām pariṇāmya tat pariṇāmaniyāmakatvena tatra sthitvā ātmano bahudhākarnāt.

Cf. also. BSBh. II. 3. 11 & 9.

materialistic view of the origination of the universe by showing the falsity of the system itself. Since the materialists (*lokāyatika*) admit only one source of knowledge : perception (*pratyakṣa*) , they naturally deny 'right' (*dharma*) and 'wrong' (*adharma*) and hence also 'heaven' (*svarga*) and 'hell' (*niraya*). A system which denies the final human end, liberation, cannot but be a purposeless system and it does not deserve the name of '*śāstra*'.<sup>14</sup> This argument shows that for Madhva the universe is more than what our senses can perceive and that the final liberation of man is in 'some way' related to the world.

#### (d) The Vaiśeṣika School

As is well known, the *Vaiśeṣikas* are atomists. For them the world is finally the product of the atoms of the four basic elements which join together in different proportion at the will (*icchā*) of Īśvara.<sup>15</sup> From the long and complicated refutation of this school, we intend to pick out only a few points which throw light on Madhva's concept of the Absolute Being.<sup>16</sup>

Since the theory is neither taught by nor in accordance with 'śruti' claims Madhva, it is not worth our considera-

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13. Tat. Di. pp. 199-200 The 'pūrvapakṣa' is explained. Cf. also B. N. K. Sharma : op. cit. p. 15.

Also E. Frauwallner, Op. Cit. Vol. II. p. 295 ff. "Der Materialismus"

14. BSBh. II. 2. 6. Cf. also Chapter II p. 37

15. Tat. Di. p. 202 Trivikrama explains the views of the "paramāṇvārambhavādins" i. e. of the Vaiśeṣikas.

Also E. Frauwallner, Op. Cit, Vol. II. p. 29 ff. Madhva here explains and refutes not the earlier Vaiśeṣika system, which was purely naturalistic and mechanistic, but the later system which had accepted the existence of a Supreme cause.

16. The mādḥva refutation of the vaiśeṣika theory of the combination of atoms and the inner difficulties of that theory do not interest us here. A detailed exposition of the mādḥva views may be seen in B. N. K. Sharma : Op. Cit. p. 30 ff.

tion.<sup>17</sup> Mere reliance on logic (*tarka*), as is the case with the *Vaiśeṣikas*, can lead one only to misfortune. More philosophically : "You say that the atoms come together at the will of Īśvara. Now, is this will of Īśvara eternal or non-eternal ? If eternal, then why were the atoms inactive during the time of dissolution (*pralaya*) ? If they were inactive, then why are they active now ? If on the contrary, you say that the will of Īśvara is non-eternal, then what is it that actuates the 'will' (*icchā*) of Īśvara ? In this case too, since the will of God is not there, the atoms must remain inactive. So, in both cases the origination of the universe remains inexplicable."<sup>18</sup>

The presuppositions which underlie this objection are very revealing. Īśvara, the eternal cause, must of necessity be eternally active, i.e., eternally producing an effect. This way of looking at divine causality necessarily does away with the possibility of a 'creation in time.'

But the point to be considered is : does not the very objection against the atomists undermine the dvaita system itself ? Dvaita too admits the eternity of the divine will and the inactivity of primary matter and the souls during the period of dissolution. Madhva, however, rejects this objection with the remark that Īśvara as taught in the Vedas is omnipotent and so everything is possible.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Madhva says that differentiation is inherent in time. One and the same time (*kāla*) has in itself a 'creation-time' (*śr̥ṣṭīkāla*) and a destruction-time (*saṃhārakāla*). At the time of creation, (*śr̥ṣṭī-kāla*) Īśvara produces the world and at the time of destruction (*saṃhāra-kāla*) he destroys the world.<sup>20</sup> So Madhva posits the creation-destruction difference (*śr̥ṣṭī-saṃhāra*) in time

17. BSBh. II. 2. 17 śrutismṛty-aparīgrhītāt...

18. ibid II. 2. 12-16 with Tat. Dī. p. 203 ff.

19. ibid. II. 2. 12 vaidikesvarasya tu vedenaiva sarvaśakti-  
tvokteḥ sarvam upapadyate

20. ibid. svata eva kāle vibhedāṅkṛteḥ ca Cf. also Tat.  
Dī. pp. 204-205.

and not in Īśvara, though he admits that this time is dependent on Viṣṇu. At each special time, we have to admit special moments in the will of Viṣṇu. At 'creation-time' there is the 'special will' of producing the world and at the time of destruction the special will of destroying the world.<sup>21</sup> In short, Madhva thinks that if we admit the omnipotence of God and an inherent, natural differentiation in time with the corresponding 'special moments' in the will of Viṣṇu, the above mentioned objection could be solved.

Of course this solution in no way answers the difficulty. Still, it is to the credit of Madhva that he has seen the difficulty of reconciling the eternal and active will of Viṣṇu, and the world's temporality add changeableness, which are dependent on that will. Still it is unfortunate that freedom as autodetermination is not dealt with either in this connection or in the discussion on the 'Śvātantrya' of Īśvara.

#### e. Nihilism (Sūnyavāda)

According to the Dvaitins, the Mādhyamikas or *Śūnyavādin*s hold that the cause of this world is *śūnya* which is taken to be non-dual, eternal, without qualities, self-luminous, free from limitations and beyond thought and speech. When the ultimate *śūnyatā* is realized, then the world of appearance would disappear.<sup>22</sup>

Can Void (*śūnya*) be the cause of the universe? For Madhva, *śūnya* means the non-existent (*asat*). It is against our experience to say that Void or non-being can produce something. If we were to admit *śūnya* could be the cause of something, then such non-existent realities like a sky-flower,

21. Tat. Dī. p. 205 samprati sṛjāmi paścāt samhariṣyāmiti viśeṣecchādikam upapadyate

22. BSBh. II. 2. 26

Tat. Dī. pp. 213-214 Trivikrama informs us that the Buddhist-Mādhyamikā view is here refuted. nityam nirviśeṣam advitīyaṁ svayamprakāśam apāstagaṇad-oṣam vānmanasāgocaram śūnyaṁ jagatkāraṇam-mādhyamikā manyante

too must be considered causes.<sup>23</sup> Non-existents are not objects of our pursuit. They cannot move us to action and endeavour.<sup>24</sup> Perception which clearly distinguishes the existent from the non-existent, reality from dream-illusion, testifies to the reality of the world. If the world is real, its cause also must be real.

#### f. Idealism (Vijñānavāda)

The Buddhist-*Vijñānavādins* admit that only consciousness is real. This school takes the world to be a modification of consciousness (*vijñānarūpamātram*).<sup>25</sup>

Madhva rejects this view because it goes against experience. As Trivikrama explains : the world is not consciousness or knowledge but the object of consciousness.<sup>26</sup> It is not right to assert that knowledge (*jñānam*) and the object of knowledge (*jñeyam*) are identical. The world of experience is permanent and consciousness is momentary. So, the world cannot be the modification of consciousness.

#### g. The Pāśupata School.

The *Pāśupatas* say that *Pāśupati* or *Śiva*, who is independent, bodiless, the giver at once of bondage and release, the

23. BSBh. II. 2. 26 adṛṣṭatvād asataḥ kāraṇatvaṃ na yuḥyate

Tat. Di. p. 214

Also II. 2. 26

24. ibid. Madva calls 'asat', udāsina—that is—something which is incapable of becoming an object of the mind with the power of inciting the knower to act either to acquire it or to avoid it. 'asat' does not possess "heyopādeyabuddhiviśayatvaṃ".

Also ibid. II. 2. 27

25. Tat. Di. p. 216 yathā śūnyavādināḥ śūnyaṃ tathā prāyo vijñānavādinā vijñānaṃ manyante

26. BSBh. II. 2. 20 Such a view is against experience.

Tat. Di. p. 216 atas samānadeśe samānakāle cānupalabdher na jñānajñeyor aikyam

BSBh. II. 2. 31 jñānaṃ kṣaṇikam arthānāṃ ca sthāyitvaṃ



support of all qualities and the universal cause, is the originator of the world.<sup>27</sup>

Madhva objects to this view, because, 'śruti' tells us that Nārāyaṇa and not Śiva is the cause of the world. Nārāyaṇa alone is the Absolute Being and Śiva is subordinate to him. Only the Absolute can be the cause of the universe and so Śiva is not the cause of the world.<sup>28</sup>

Secondly, only a being endowed with a body can enter into a causal relation with another. Śiva, as the Pāśupatas themselves say, has no body and therefore, is incapable of being the world's cause. Madhva and Trivikrama point out that a bodiless being is like a 'dead-being'. It is inactive.<sup>29</sup> Madhva writes further : 'Either Paśupati has a body or he has none. If he has a body then he is finite (*antavat*)' that is he is subject to birth and death. If he has no body, then (a) he cannot be a cause (b) he has no knowledge, for only beings endowed with a body can have knowledge.<sup>30</sup> As an after thought Madhva adds : these objections cannot be adduced against the Vaiṣṇava position for Viṣṇu is endowed with a body of intelligence, bliss and power and his knowledge is unmixed with ignorance.<sup>31</sup>

#### (h) The Śākta Schools

The *Śāktas* believe that *Śakti* is the ultimate principle. It is a female principle. While the *Mahāvāma* school affirms that *Śakti* is all-in-all and that she needs no partnership with *Śiva*, her consort, in the production of the world, the other

27. Tat. Dī. p. 218 Short exposition of the Pāśupata School.

28. BSBh. II. 2. 37

29. ibid. II. 2. 38-39: Cf also Chapter III.

30. ibid. II. 2. 41 dehavattve 'ntavattvam, anyathā jñānābhāvaḥ śar.riṇa eva jñānadṛṣṭiḥ

31. ibid. Viṣṇos tu śrutyaiḥ virodhāḥ parihṛtāḥ....

schools, *Madhyavāma* and *Aṇuvāma*, do accept that Śiva has a subordinate role to play in the origination of the world.<sup>32</sup>

Madhva rejects the *Śākta* schools for the following reasons. The female principle (*Śakti*) alone without the aid of the male principle (*puruṣa*) cannot produce the world, because the female principle by itself is insufficient to bring forth an effect.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps what he means is that a subordinate cause like *Śakti* needs to be actuated by the primary cause.

The *Śākta* position which attributes to Śiva a subordinate role in the production of the universe is inadmissible, because Śiva is not endowed with the necessary faculties of knowledge, etc, Madhva also seems to suggest that the male principle cannot be subordinated to the female principle.<sup>34</sup> Finally, if the *Śāktas* were to admit that Śiva is endowed with all the necessary powers of 'creation', then Madhva does not see why *Śakti* is needed at all for the production of the world. Śiva alone can then produce the world. The final reason why Madhva rejects the *Śākta* view is that it is opposed to the sacred texts.<sup>35</sup>

### (i) Can Souls be the Cause of the World ?

Unlike primary matter, the soul is a conscious being. Experience tells us that the soul does actually engage in activity and does bring works to a conclusion. So the

32. AV. II. 2. 42. with NS.

Tat. Dī. p. 221. Explanation of the śākta views. Śakti is said to be 'sarvajñā, sarveśvarī sarvakartrī, sadāśivapradhāṇa sarve tadadhīnā etc.

33. na hi puruṣānanugrhitā sribhya utpattir. Three different Śākta-Schools are mentioned: Mahānta, Madhyamā, Kṣudrā. For details, Tat. Dī. p. 221-222 na hi puruṣānanugrhitā sribhya utpattir drśyate.

BSBh. II. 2. 42.

34. BSBh. II. 2. 43-44

35. ibid. II. 2. 45 sakalaśrutyādivirudhatvāt

doubt could arise whether the soul could not be the cause of the world.<sup>36</sup>

But as Madhva points out the soul which is dependent on Viṣṇu as regards pain and pleasure is not an independent being and hence is not an independent agent. The activity which is noticed in the soul is to be attributed to another. The inner ruler, Viṣṇu, is the real agent. Madhva approvingly quotes the Mahābhārata text which compares the *jīva* to a puppet in the hands of a man. How can such a dependent being be the cause of the world?<sup>37</sup>

### Conclusion

Let us try to gather together the scattered threads of thought which underlie the mādharma refutation of the non-Vaiṣṇava schools. (a) A non-conscious being, a being devoid of knowledge cannot be the author of the world, for it is incapable of purposeful activity. To the Mādhvas the world is an ordered and purposeful 'thing' and so the world's producer must be endowed with knowledge.

(b) Īśvara's causal influence on the universe is not to be considered deistically. It touches the very intrinsic nature of *prakṛti* itself. As we shall see later, the activity of God is lasting.

(c) The universe is deeper and higher than what our senses can perceive. It is a place of *dharma* and *adharma*. The destiny of the *jīvas* gives the ultimate finality to the world. The *sarvanāmāta* of Viṣṇu implies that the world is at once a curtain and a mirror: a curtain veiling God from the ignorant and a mirror for the knower.

(d) The universe can neither be considered an appearance nor an illusion. The world is real and it originates from a

36. BSBh. II. 1. 13

ibid. II. 1. 25 *jīvena kāryopasamhāradarśanāt tasya kartṛtvam iti cet.*

37. ibid. The activity of the *jīvas* "asvātantryāt parakṛta eva"

real cause. Nor can we consider the world a projection of consciousness. On the other hand the reality of consciousness is to be explained by the reality of the world on which consciousness depends.

(e) The author of the universe is not only endowed with knowledge; he is also omnipotent and independent. A dependent being like the soul is incapable of producing the universe. Only an omnipotent being can be the 'sufficient reason of the cycle of origination etc.

## 2. Viṣṇu, the Cause of the 'Origination' (sṛṣṭi) of the World

### (a) Preliminary Remarks.

To avoid all misunderstandings, let us make a few important remarks.

1. In Dvaita Vedānta Śrī, the souls, primary matter, time, etc., are eternal entities. So, when we speak of the origination of the universe, we are not speaking of the absolute origination of these entities, but of the evolution of matter and the coming together of the soul and matter. We are speaking of the manifestation of the non-divine realities, which lie unmanifest during the time of dissolution.

(2) But whether Madhva's idea of 'Independence and non-independence' (*svatantra-asvatantra*) and whether some of his statements on Viṣṇu's causality could not be interpreted differently from the usual Indian scholastic statements on the production of the world is a question to be examined later.

(3) We have already explained that according to the sacred tradition (*Śruti*) and syllogistic reasoning '*yukit*' based on śruti, Viṣṇu alone is the cause of the universe. Our task now is to examine carefully the mādhva texts to see what he means by this.

(4) Madhva uses a number of terms to express the idea that Viṣṇu is the cause of the world. What do these terms

signify? In AV, Madhva uses the word, 'udbhava'<sup>38</sup> In V. T. V., the word *utpatti*' is made use of.<sup>39</sup> The production of the world and Viṣṇu's causal relation to the world are often expressed by the word *sr̥ṣṭi* and *janma*.<sup>40</sup> The vedic words *pitr* and *janitr* are applied to Viṣṇu.<sup>41</sup> So, Viṣṇu is called the 'father or progenitor' of the world. *Sarga* which is just another term for *sr̥ṣṭi* occurs often in Madhva's writings.<sup>42</sup>

In the unending cyclic world-process, the first state of the world is therefore, expressed by the terms : *janma*, *sr̥ṣṭi*, *udbhava*, *utpatti*, *sarga*. Viṣṇu as producer of the world is designated by the words *janitā*, *sr̥ṣṭā*, *pitā*, *sarvakartā*, etc. All these terms were current in the Indian tradition of Madhva's time as the quotations in his writings show. The words '*utpatti*' and '*udbhava*' denote the manifestation of a latent being; *sr̥ṣṭi sarga* and *janma* seem to express the idea of emission or emanation of a being from another in which it is latently contained.

It is a fact that Madhva holds the view that primary matter souls, ( *jīvas* ), time etc., are eternal entities. It is equally true that he affirms that Viṣṇu is the cause of the origination of the world. Does this affirmation mean that Viṣṇu is the cause of the manifestation of the world which lies in an unmanifest form during the period of world dissolution? The most important objective of Madhva in all his writings is to show to the world the absolute greatness and power of Viṣṇu

38. AV. I. 1. 1. asyodbhavādidam....

39. VTV. no. 109

40. VTV. nos. 243, 260

VTV. 1. 90 The word 'Janma' occurs in BS. I. 1. 2

41. BSBh. I. 1. 2

VTV. nos. 59, 439, etc.

42. VTV. no. 439 The word 'sarga' is used instead of *sr̥ṣṭi*. *utpatti*, and *udbhava* mean 'origination', arising, 'janma' means birth.



The statements that Viṣṇu is the cause of the origination, sustenance and dissolution of the world are meant to prove this one point. So, when Madhva writes that the world originates from Viṣṇu, he does not intend to affirm that extra-divine existents as such actually originate from Viṣṇu but that the eternal finite beings are under the control of Viṣṇu and their modifications are caused by him. In fact the very manifestation of all finite beings depends on Viṣṇu. We shall take up later this point for further clarification.<sup>43</sup>

### (b) The 'Reality' of Beings and Viṣṇu

The problem we have to touch upon now is : Are all non-divine realities dependent on Viṣṇu ? If they are dependent on Viṣṇu, then in what way are they so ?

The characteristic mark of Viṣṇu is his independence (*svātatantrya*). Viṣṇu is independent of all other beings as regards his nature (*svarūpa*), action (*pravṛtti*), and knowledge (*pramiti*). All other beings are dependent of Viṣṇu, in all these three spheres. Now, Madhva includes under the category of dependent beings both being (*bhāva*) and non-being (*abhāva*). The *bhāva tattvas* (positive beings) whether eternal (e. g., primary matter, the souls etc.) or non-eternal beings like post or mixed beings,<sup>44</sup> are all dependent on Viṣṇu. To the first question therefore, the answer is that according to Madhva all finite beings are dependent on Viṣṇu.

The second question; in what way are they dependent on Viṣṇu, is more difficult to answer. Madhva loves to quote a text from the Bhāg. Purāṇa : "Substance, action and time, nature and the personal principle are by his favour and are not when his favour is absent."<sup>45</sup> As Jayatīrtha says :

43. *Sṛṣṭi* and *sarga* mean 'production'.

44. *Tattvasaṃkhyāna*

45. AV. I. 1. 13; Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 23-25, BSBh. II. 1. 37 etc. *dravyaṃ karma ca kālas ca svabhāvo jīva eva ca yadanugrahataḥ santi na santi yadupekṣayā.* (Bhag. Purāṇa II. 10. 12)

substance(*dravya*) means material realities like primary matter (*prakṛti*), action (*karma*) stands for *dharma* and *adharma* (right and wrong), nature (*svabhāva*) signifies the proper nature of each being, *jīva* (the personal principle).<sup>46</sup> Now, we know that some of these are eternal and others non-eternal entities (*tattvas*). They are or they are not by the favour or absence of the favour of Viṣṇu. In the general context of Madhva's system, the words '*santi*' and '*na santi*' do not seem to signify pure and simple existence but such a mode or state of existence. When Jayatīrtha for example says 'the being (*jātā*) of the material cause is dependent on the Supreme Lord', he does not intend to teach *creatio ex nihilo* in the Christian scholastic sense of the term. What he teaches is the dependence of primary matter on Viṣṇu in as much as it is the material cause of the world. In 'Dvaita-terms', what is asserted here is *parādhīnaviśēṣāpati*, the acquisition of an attribute in dependence on another. This idea is explained in some detail by Madhva in his commentary on the Bh. Gī. (VII. 7-11). In verse 8 Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that he is the essence of water, the glow of the moon and the sun.' But Kṛṣṇa had already designated himself as the source of the whole universe in verse 6. Madhva therefore, argues thus : from the above universal statement it follows that Kṛṣṇa, the cause and enjoyer of the essence etc., may be called essence, glow and so on. 'Such being the case, why should Kṛṣṇa in verse 8 specifically say that he is the essence of water etc. ? By '*rasa*' (essence-taste-fine element). Madhva understands those essential elements and non-adventitious qualities of water. So in verse 8, Kṛṣṇa wants to make known to Arjuna that not only water, but also the very nature of water and its various essential qualities are dependent on him. In our daily experience we see causes acting upon certain materials and producing effects. A weaver for example by his action produces a piece of cloth. But his action does not reach down to the level of the smell

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46. The NS text is fully quoted by S. Siauue. *La Voie vers la Connaissance* p. 34

(*gandha*) and *rasa* (the taste) of the cloth, much less to the *dharma* (quality) of smell and taste. The qualities of the cloth are concomitantly produced in the production of the substance. Viṣṇu's causality is quite different from that of the worldly causes. Viṣṇu produces not only water, but also the very qualities of water and the very essence of these qualities (that which makes the qualities what they are).<sup>47</sup> So, for Madhva verse 8 has a specific purpose in view and that purpose is the teaching of the doctrine that Viṣṇu's greatness lies not so much in the production of substances,<sup>48</sup> but in his power to produce and to control and consequently to enjoy every 'quality' of every substance. Once again, what is taught here is not '*creatio ex nihilo*' but '*parādhīnaviśeṣāpti*'.

Both Madhva and Jayatīrtha have specifically dealt with the problem of the eternal substances and their relation to Viṣṇu. In NS, Jayatīrtha puts the question: can an eternal reality be said to be dependent on another? He answers: 'non-eternal objects like pots are ruled non-eternally, even so,

47. Bh. Gī. VII. 6 ahaṃ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ. pralayas tathā

Bh. Gī. Bh. VII. 6 'The Lord is not only the master of everything he is the cause and "enjoyer" of all.

Sattāpratītyādeḥ kāraṇatvād, bhokṛtvāt ca....

Pr. Dī. gives more explanations

Bh. Gī. VII. 8 raso 'ham apsu kaunteya prabhā' smi śāsisūryayoḥ

Bh. Gī. Bh. VII. 8-11

Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. Bh. VII. 8. Pasādayaś ca te svabhāvā abādīnām anāgantukadharmās ca....

ibid. yathā loke kuvindādīḥ paṭādidravyeṣv eva vyāpāravān anubhūyate, na tu tadīyeṣu gandharasādiṣu guṇeṣu, taddharmeṣu ca gandhatvādiṣu pṛthag vyāpāravān, kintu paṭādījanmānasāṅgijamnān eva. na tathā bhagavān, api tv abāder dharmeṣu rasādiṣu taddharmeṣu ca svabhāvatvādiṣu ca pṛthak prayantnavān.

48. ibid. abādībhogād apy atīyayena rasāder bhogaḥ paramēśvarasyeti darśayati

eternal objects are ruled eternally by Īśvara. The non-eternal character of pots etc., is not without a cause. In the same manner, there is no reason why the eternity of eternal objects be not dependent on another. This dependence however, does not in anyway make the eternal objects non-eternal as the dependent permanence of a pot does not make it eternal.<sup>49</sup> This passage clearly shows that the Mādhvas have tried to 'look behind' the world process and have sought to express Viṣṇu's mysterious supremacy over the eternal *tattoas*. As Madhva himself says- "The Lord, by his eternal power which properly appertains to him, rules eternally the eternal according to its eternal nature, just as he rules the non-eternal according to its non-eternal nature. This is said the R. V. (Śruti) "nothing happens without you" (X. 112.9)<sup>50</sup>

Finally, let us analyse a text from Madhva's, Gī Bh. The problem which Madhva has to solve here is the following. The Vedas according to Madhva are eternal and non-conscious. At the same time, Madhva holds that the entire Śruti has Viṣṇu for its primary purport. From these two statements there arise two problems:

(1) How can the eternal non-conscious Vedas have Viṣṇu for their purport? Owing to the 'directive rule' of Viṣṇu, is Madhva's reply.

(2) But how can the eternal non-conscious Vedas be under the 'directive rule' of Viṣṇu? To this objection the answer is the independent and absolute power of Viṣṇu. Madhva adds: this direction (*niyama*) is from eternity. Jayatīrtha clearly asserts that no cause other than Viṣṇu can be the directive cause of the eternal substances, because no other

49. NS. nityasya parādhīnatā sambhavād ity ata āha. yathānityaṃ ghaṭādikam anityatayā niyamyate, tathā nityaṃ api nityātmanā nityaṃ sarvadaiveśvaro niyamayati....

(The complete text in B. N. K. Sharma, Op. Cit. p. 157)

50. AV. II. 2.37 ff.

cause has independent and absolute power.<sup>51</sup> The order of the vedic *varṇas*, though the same always, is willed and manifested by Viṣṇu at the beginning of each cycle (*kalpa*). The *varṇas* in their individual reality and in their proper power of signification are also dependent on Viṣṇu. It is Viṣṇu who ultimately wills that each *varṇa* and word should signify one or other aspect of his greatness. When it is said that Viṣṇu is the eternal "seer" of the Vedas, it means that *his* seeing constitutes the Vedas as a mirror of his own being. As Madhva himself says : "It is Hari, under his five forms who is expressed by the Vedas. He who is the essence of the Vedas gives them their eternity."<sup>52</sup>

In the B. S. Bh. II 1.18, Madhva connects the beginningless causality of Viṣṇu and the beginningless character of the world. 'He is called the eternal cause because he produces (*kurute*) the eternal world. Against the Sēṣvara Sāṃkhyins, who teach a type of deist concept of divine causality, Madhva says that Viṣṇu gives existence etc., to primary matter.<sup>53</sup> In all these citations we find that Madhva affirms the dependence on Viṣṇu, not only of non-eternal substances, but also of eternal entities.

### (c) Viṣṇu is only the Efficient Cause and not the Material Cause of the World

In all the Vedānta schools, Brahman, the Absolute Being is designated as the cause of the origination of this universe, because the very second sūtra of the Brahma-sūtras explicitly teaches us so. But in some schools like the *Bheda-abheda* of Bhāskara and Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja, Brahman is both the efficient (*nimitta*) and the supportive (*upādāna*) cause of the world. In fact the 'causal terminology' (*śrīṣṭi, sarga,*

51. Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 23 with Pr. Dī.

52. Ch. U. Bh. III. 1-5. sa vācyaḥ sarvavedanām evaṃ pancātmako hariḥ/ vedānām sarvabhūto' sau vedānaṃ nityatāpradaḥ

53. Cf. Chap. IV. p. 91.



*janma* etc.) has an emanationistic meaning both in the Vedāntic and Pāñcarātra traditions. Madhva himself is utilising this terminology and hence we may get the impression that for him too, Brahman is the material cause of the world. This impression is strengthened by the fact that he quotes (approvingly) many creation myths which are openly emanationistic.

In spite of these two facts we must admit that Madhva is in no way an emanationist. He explicitly rejects the position that Viṣṇu can be the material cause of the world. In this he differs from the main Vedāntic and Pāñcarātra traditions.

The *bheda-abheda* theory of *Bhāskara* and others for example, accept the reality of the world. But they believe that the world rests on Brahman as its support. Brahman is the stuff from out of which the whole universe successively springs forth. There is a periodic evolution of the world from out of Brahman and a reabsorption into it. This theory is based on upaniṣādic texts like : "Brahman alone is real without a second; he desired, let me be many". (Tai. Up. II. 6) which affirm that ultimately Brahman alone is real and that it transformed itself into "the many". Just as the pot is different and non-different from the clay, so is the world is different and non-different from Brahman. When the Scriptures say that *prakṛti* is the material cause of the world, the *Bhedābheda*vādins understand the term as Brahman, in as much as it is the supportive cause of the world. According to them Brahman is not merely the supportive cause of the world, but also the efficient (*nimitta*) cause. There are different powers in Brahman. Its "power of being" (*sat-śakti*) is the supportive (material) cause of the world whereas its "spiritual thought-power" (*cit-śakti*) is the principle of immutability and the source of efficient causality.<sup>54</sup>

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54. In the pañcarātras, Viṣṇu's attribute 'śakti' enables him to become the material cause of the world. (O. Schrader, Op. Cit. p. 33)

Madhva naturally, refutes the view that Brahman can be the supportive cause of the world and that the world is a modification of the Supreme Being (*Brahma pariyāma*). In our reflections on the Supreme Lord we should never lose sight of a truth. "Whatever is not in keeping with the majesty of the Lord, what is opposed to it is to be rejected. What is opposed to his lordship, that is evidently unfit for him. All proofs and statements should be understood in consonance with his sovereignty."<sup>55</sup> Basing himself on this principle, Madhva affirms that the acceptance of Brahman's modification is a real affront to his lordship.

In B.S.Bh, Madhva says that change (*vikāritvam*) is possible only where there is (inner) division. Experience testifies that changeable entities are 'divided' entities. Now Viṣṇu is unchangeable because he is undivided (he has no parts.)<sup>56</sup>

The whole process of creation is explained by means of a chain of higher and lower emanations. The material causality of Viṣṇu in the production of the world is taught in the Purāṇas too. According to Viṣṇu-Purāṇa "Viṣṇu ist sowohl bewirken deals auch materiale Ursache der Welt. "Von", "aus" Viṣṇu sind die Urprinzipien, die das Śāṅkhya system lehrt." (P. Hacker : Prahlāda Vol. I p. 83)

And B. Kumarppa (Op. Cit. P. 99) tells us that "The Pañcarātras and the Purāṇas regard the universe, as emanating, principle by principle as in the Śāṅkhya, from Prakṛti, which however, they regard as contained in the Supreme Being, and controlled by Him". Rāmānuja also admits that Viṣṇu is both the efficient and material cause of the world. (Sri-Bhāṣya I. 4.3) So when Madhva teaches that Viṣṇu is only the efficient cause of the world, he is surely departing from the general Vaiṣṇava-Vedānta position; and accepting a doctrine held by the Naiyayika. Cf. A. V. I. 4.5 ff.

55. A. V. I. 4. 58 ff. Na yuktamīsituh kimcidīśatvasya virodhi yat yadīśatvavirodhi syāt tadevayuktam īśatvasya avirodhena yojayitva akhilāḥ pramāḥ.

56. BSBh. II. 3.7 vibhaktatvāc ca vikāritvam yuktam vikāriṇa eva loke vibhaktā dṛśyante eko' vibhaktāḥ paramaḥ puruṣo Viṣṇuḥ

....

....

....

yo vibhāgī vikāraḥ sa, so' vikāraḥ paro Hariḥ.

A little further in the same work, Madhva speaks of change as a type of dependence. All supportive (material) causes are dependent causes. Viṣṇu is absolutely independent and hence he is unchangeable. Madhva continues; he (Viṣṇu) the unchangeable effects the changeable. Though he is the power in those beings endowed with power, still he is devoid of all parts.<sup>57</sup> So Viṣṇu, the undivided and the absolutely independent being, who is eternally perfect and unchangeable, cannot be the material cause (*upādānakāraṇa*) of the world, because the very notion of material causality carries within it the idea of change and dependence.

“The term *prakṛti* does not signify Brahman considered as the material (supportive) cause. The eternal *Ātman*, the eternal Hari, is without change, pure, whose knowledge and power are always of the same nature (unchangeable) whose form is felicity, devoid of modification, imperishable, pure, without suffering, old age, death; he is not the universe, but its author; he is without birth; this (Hari) is termed the Supreme. He who is without modification, incomparable, unchangeably of the same essence, indestructible, this being is termed by the believers in the Vedas as *Brahman* and *Paramātmān*. These words of Śruti and the Purāṇas affirm that *Janārdana* does not know any modifications or change” (A. V. 1.4.58 ff.).

How can Brahman the supremely blessed Lord become the world? The world is full of limitations, bondage and real sufferings. Suffering is not an illusion even from Brahman’s point of view. Not even a fool wants to become inferior to himself. Then what about a wise person? It is unworthy of God to transform himself into this imperfect world. In fact Madhva and Jayatirtha are at pains to show that *Brahmaparīṇāmavāda* is nothing but pantheism. Like all pantheism it

57. *ibid.* II. 3.9 *paratantraviśeṣo hi vikāra itī kīrtitah avikāro’ pi bhagavān sarvaśaktitvāhetutah vikārahetukaṃ sarvaṃ kurute nirvikāravān*

too destroys the absoluteness of the Absolute and lowers it to the level of the limited, the finite, the suffering and bound realities.

Another argument against the material causality' of Viṣṇu is to be found in AV : 'the non-conscious being can never be the product of a conscious being nor the conscious being the product of a non-conscious being'.<sup>58</sup> It is clear from this text that, for Madhva, the gulf between spirit and matter is unbridgeable and hence the view that the Supreme Spirit could evolve into this world is absurd. If matter can be an evolute of the spirit, then logically we should accept the materialist position that consciousness is the evolute of matter.<sup>59</sup>

We may ask the question : cannot a part of Viṣṇu be the material cause of the world, though the other part remains unchanged ? To this Madhva replies : Viṣṇu has no parts. But he immediately adds : that part of Brahman which remains unchanged, that alone we designate as our Īśvara (God).<sup>60</sup> So, Madhva does not admit that even a part of Viṣṇu can be the material cause of the whole universe. Jayatīrtha summarises the whole discussion very clearly in his NS. "There are two completely different beings (*vastunī*). One is the unchangeable efficient cause (*nimitta*) of the world. The other is the changeable (*pariṇāmī*) material cause of the world."<sup>61</sup>

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58. AV. 1. 4. 68 ss na cetanavikāraḥ syād yatra kvāpi hy acetanaṃ nācetanavikaro' pi cetanaḥ syāt kadācana.

59. NS. to 1. 4. 68 ff yadi punaḥ kāraṇasvarūpānugamam antareṇa vikārivikārabhāvo' bhyupagamyeta, tadā cetano' pya cetanavikāraḥ kiṃ nābhyupagantavyaḥ.

60. Av. 1. 4. 71 ff. bhāgena pariṇāmaś cet bhāgayor bheda eva hi

yo bhāgo no vikārī syāt sa evāsmākam Īśvaraḥ

61. NS. quoted by S. Siao ve Op. Cit. p. 303 f. parasparaṃ atyantabhinne dve vastunī / tatraikaṃ nirvikāraṃ jagannimittam eva/

Can we say that the material causality of Brahman consists in this that he illusorily appears as this world (*vivarta*)? According to this view, the Absolute is the real substratum of this universe and the universe is only an illusory appearance superimposed on the reality of Brahman. Brahman really does not act and produce this world. His activity and the effect of this activity are illusory, though they have a real substratum, which is nothing but 'his own absolute reality'.<sup>62</sup> The sub schools of Advaita have explai-

aparam pariṇāmi jagadupādānam eva ity angikāre  
nirvikārasya jagannimittayāsmābhir īśvaratvena  
pariṇāmino jagadupādānasya pradhānatvena cāṅgi-  
kṛtatvāt.

The text which most clearly teaches Viṣṇu's unchangeability and hence the impossibility of Viṣṇu becoming the material cause of the world occurs in Ch. Up. Bh. VI. 8.

Jagato mūlam apy eṣa nimittaṃ na vikāravān,  
bijajīvo yathā mūlam āṅkurasyāvikārataḥ  
Yathā pitā putratānvās taddeho hi vikāravān  
evam Harir mūlam api na vikāraḥ kathaṃcana.

According to Madhva, the parents are not the material cause of the child. Nor is the spider the material cause of the thread it emits. The food taken by the parents constitutes the partial material cause of the matter (body) of the child. So also the thread is produced out of the food of the spider. (A. V. 1. 4. 66 N. S. to 1. 4. 83 & 64). In the same way Janārdana having "consumed" primordial matter (possessing and controlling prakṛti totally) produces the world out of it. Prakṛti is eternally different from Viṣṇu.

62. This is the so called "Vivartavāda" of the Advaitins. It may be worth noting here that in Śaṅkara the noun "vivarta" in its philosophical sense does not occur. "Dies Fehlen ist kein Zufall; es weist vielmehr darauf hin, dass Śaṅkara den illusionistischen Gebrauch des Wortes nicht kannte oder absichtlich ignorierte." (P. Hacker, Vivarta.... p. 24).

The verb 'vivartate' occurs in SBh. I. 3. 39

"Śaṅkara's Kosmologie ist eine Art illusionistischer Pariṇāmavāda Das heißt: Er behält die Begriffe der altvedāntischen, realistischen Emanationslehre



ned in different ways the illusory appearance of the world. Brahman because of its *māyā* (illusory power) appears as the world or throws up an illusory world, or the *jīvas* (souls) because of their ignorance think of the world as real. In any case the Advaitins do not accept the reality of the world.

Madhva dismisses this view of Brahman's causality. First of all, for Madhva the world is real: it has a reality of its own distinct from the reality of Brahman, though dependent on him. The real Brahman is a real cause and the real activity of Brahman produces a real effect. Only impotent beings which are incapable of producing real effects have recourse to magic and illusory activity. Brahman is the absolutely real and independent being and therefore, needs no magic or yogic power to produce this world.<sup>63</sup>

bei; fügt ihnen aber immer wieder illusionistische Gedanken hinzu." (ibid. p. 27).

Padmapāda and especially Prakāśātman use the word 'vivarta' "für den Übergang vom Realen zum Schein" (ibid. p. 38). Prakāśātman writes "Einige aber sagen, daß sich das Brahman selbst zur Welt entwickle (pariṇamate) wie Ton Zum Topf.

Dies lehnt (Pādmapāda) ab, wenn er sagt: Die ganze Welt entwickelt sich scheinbar. (vivartate) (ibid. p. 39) For more details on Prakāśātman;

K. Cammann, Op. cit. pp. 124-128 and pp. 130-131. On the latter development of vivartavāda. Cf. P. Hrcker, Op. Cit. p. 41 ff.

The advaita theory of vivartavāda had two important sub-schools. One school thinks that Brahman is the locus of māyā or avidyā. The other school places the principle of nescienc and illusion in Jīva.

63. Cf. Chapter IV.

Bhāg. Tāt. indrajālavidhām sṛṣṭim manyante  
jñānadurbalāḥ  
nityam nirastendrajāle svata eva katham bhavet  
anantācintyavibhavaḥ katham tam ihate Hariḥ

...

evam vidhānubhāvayaḥ sa katham ninditam sṛjet.

Madhva reduces the advaitic problem to a simple alternative. Any illusion must pertain to a subject. Now who is the subject of this world-illusion? According to the basic advaita position there is only one reality, Brahman. So *māyā* and the resulting illusory appearances must pertain to it. This is an impossibility because the Advaitins themselves say that Brahman is omniscient, self-luminous, supreme light. To admit that the subject of the illusion is the *Jīva* implies further contradictions. Is not the *Jīva* itself the effect of illusion? How then can the *Jīva* be both the subject or the ground and the effect of illusion? The Advaitins cannot escape these difficulties by making *māyā*, a cosmic power. Is this *māyā* really different from Brahman? If so, the whole theory of advaita, the unicity of reality, falls. To make of *māyā* a type of "ignorance with a certain existential reality" (*bhāvarūpa-ajñāna*) which is neither real (*sat*) nor unreal (*asat*) is no solution to the problem. Madhva rejects as we have seen a reality which is neither real nor unreal, but different from both and an intermediary between the two. Such a reality is self contradictory. We have no proofs for the existence of such a reality. So the view that the world is an illusory manifestation of Brahman is riddled with contradictions.<sup>64</sup>

#### (d) The Dvaita Theory of Sad-Asat-Kārya Vāda

According to the *Sāṃkhyins*, the effect preexists in the supportive cause (*upādānākāraṇa*). Because of the mere presence of the *puruṣa* (*Sannidhimātra*) *prakṛti* begins to evolve and to manifest effects potentially contained in it. In fact nothing really new comes into existence. The effects are already in the cause.<sup>65</sup>

This extreme view is unacceptable to the Dvaitins. The *Sāṃkhyins* accept the reality of the cause, *prakṛti*. But they do not really accept the reality of the effects because they hold that the effects are already in the cause. Thus they

64. A. V. 1. 4. 84, 87 ff.

65. Cf. Siauve S. "La Doctrine ... p. 311 ff.

reduce the reality of the effects to the reality of the cause. This certainly goes against our experience. Effects are not simple manifestations of a pre-existing reality. They are real and new. They did not exist before their production; they will not exist after their destruction. The effect does not pre-exist as effect. It exists "in the form of the cause."<sup>66</sup> Otherwise there would be instability and uncertainty as regards the notion and reality of production and destruction.

Does not this dvaita view fall into the nyāya-vaiśeṣika position of "asatkārya-vāda", the non-existence of the effect in the cause (supportive cause). Would not such a position imply that any effect could be produced from any cause? That would certainly threaten the order and the regular sequence of cause-effect series in the world.

The Dvaitins by no means affirm that the effect is totally non-existent in the cause. The effect in some way pre-exists (*sat*) and does not pre-exist (*asat*) in the cause. But did not the Mādhvas object to the *Bheda-abheda vādins* and the *Sad-asad-vilakṣaṇa-vādins*, because they try to combine two mutually cancelling concepts? Is not the dvaita position vitiated by the same defect? No, say the Dvaitins. The effect is not said to be at once real and unreal or different from both. The effect is termed real and unreal not in itself, but in relation to the cause. The effect is *sat* (real) before its production, because it exists in as much as the cause exists. But the effect as effect is *asat* (unreal). Once it is produced it exists as a new being with its own name, form, and capacity to acquire new specifications. It can become the cause of other effects. Before its production however, it is not discerned as different from the cause. But as regards the efficient cause there is always a distinction between the cause and the effect.<sup>67</sup>

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66. A. V. II. 1. 93.

67. *ibid*, "nityabhedo nimittena hyupādānena tu dvayam/  
asat yat kāryarūpeṇa kāraṇātmatayāsti hi/

Does not the Bh. Gītā II. 16 say : "Of what is not, there is no becoming; of what is, there is no ceasing to be." Madhva is certainly ready to accept the principle that out of absolute nothing, nothing can come to be. Nor can being be reduced to nothingness. But the text does not teach that the effect as effect pre-exists in the cause. From experience we know that every effect issues out of a determinate, pre-existing cause endowed with the power to produce that effect. So there is no possibility of indeterminism in the world. The cause-effect series is ordered and determinate, For the Dvaitins the production of an effect out of the supportive cause always implies a transformation, a modification. The cause loses some of its specifications (*viśeṣas*) and acquires new ones. It is only when the new *viśeṣas* are acquired by a continual process in time, we speak of an effect. Ultimately it is *prakṛti* which is in continual transformation according to its potentialities assuring regularity, order and yet newness in the world.

The *Sāṃkhya*ins place the totality of power (*śakti*) that enables *prakṛti* to modify and to evolve in *prakṛti* itself. For Madhva, however, the only being that possesses Supreme *śakti* is Viṣṇu. By *śakti*, Madhva does not understand the cause itself, but a power, a capacity, that is distinct from the nature of the things.<sup>68</sup> *Śakti* is not perceptible. It is inferred because of the invariable concomitance that exists between the cause and the effect. In the last analysis, *Śakti* is intuited by the *Sākṣin*. Viṣṇu alone possesses all the powers (*sarvaśaktimīn*, *victra-śaktimīn*). The other beings receive their *śakti* from him. So the power of *prakṛti* to be the supportive cause of the world is dependent on Viṣṇu. In fact all supportive causes are dependent causes. It is the efficient cause that possesses independence.<sup>69</sup> Independence, as we

68. NS. to I. 2. 9.

69. Gī. T. N. III 5. kartṛtvam dvividham proktam, vikāraśca svatantratā, vikāraḥ prakṛter eva, viṣṇor eva svatantratā iti pañgīśruteh.

have seen, essentially implies consciousness; knowledge, spirit. So Madhva distinguishes two orders of causes-supportive (material) (*upādāna*) and efficient (*nimitta*). The supportive (material) cause undergoes transformation i. e., there is the acquisition (*āpti*) of new specifications (*viśeṣas*). But the active power that transforms *prakṛti* comes from the Spirit, ultimately from the Supreme Being, Viṣṇu, who alone is totally independent. So the acquisition of specifications is dependent on another, viz., Viṣṇu (*parādhīna*). Thus it is through the cooperation of these two orders of causes *prakṛti* (*upādāna*) and Viṣṇu (*nimitta*), the origination of the world is explained.

(e) **Viṣṇu and the 'Instruments' (*sādhana*) used in the Origination of the world.**

From what we have said, it is clear that Viṣṇu makes use of *prakṛti* in the production of the world. But are there not other instruments (materials) used by him in his work of bringing forth this world? Moreover, from experience we know that a weaver, for instance, produces a piece of cloth with the help of materials which are independent of the weaver. They have their own causal efficacy. Without these materials or instruments, the weaver is incapable of producing the cloth. Such being our experience, we are entitled to ask whether Viṣṇu, in the production of the world, has need of any independent materials or instruments?<sup>70</sup>

The origination of the world proceeds from the essential power of Viṣṇu alone.<sup>71</sup> In relation to the causality of Viṣṇu we cannot speak of any independent material or instrument.

70. BSBh. II. 1. 15 svatantrabahuśādhanaḥ sṛṣṭir loke  
Tat. Dī. p. 173 dṛṣṭā explains the statement with  
example.

71. BSBh. II. 1. 15 Svatantra-bahuśvadhanā sṛṣṭir loke  
dṛṣṭā, naivam brahmaṇaḥ, svarūpa  
sāmarthyād eva tasya sṛṣṭiḥ Cf. also.  
A. V. II. 1. 104 ff.



In order to prove this point, Madhva quotes Rg V. X, 81, a hymn addressed to Viśvakarman. "What was the place where he took his station? What was it that supported him? How was it? Whence Viśvakarman, seeing all, produced the earth, with mighty power disclosed the heavens." "What was the tree, what the wood in sooth produced it, from which they fashioned out the earth and heaven?" The verses refer to Viśvakarman who as sacrificial priest offers us the world which he had made. Madhva applies this verse to Viṣṇu, and interprets it as a question as to whether Viṣṇu used different instruments or materials in his work of producing the world. Madhva's answer to the above question is that every instrument which Viṣṇu may deign to use is already dependent on him. Only finite and dependent agents are in need of materials and instruments in order to effect something. Viṣṇu is the independent agent on whom the instrumentality (*sādhana-tva*) of the instruments depends.<sup>72</sup>

The use of materials (*sādhana*s) in one's activity is no imperfection; on the contrary, it is a sign of power and lordship provided the materials used are not independent of the agent.<sup>73</sup> The more means a king has at his disposal for his activity, the greater is his lordship. Madhva says, that from the sacred tradition and from experience it is clear that Viṣṇu makes use of various materials in the production of the world. What is unacceptable is only that these materials are independent of Viṣṇu. Trivikrama summarises the whole discussion thus : 'before the production of the world, there

72. BSBh. II. 1. 15 paratantre hy apekṣate svatantraḥ kiṃ apekṣate. sādhanānāṃ sādhanatvaṃ yataḥ kiṃ tasya sādhanaiḥ.

73. ibid. II. 1. 19 sādhanasampattiraiśvaryaadyotikā bhavet

ibid. II. 1.21 All the materials used by Viṣṇu in the production of the world are indwelt by him.

Tat. Dī. p 180 All the materials are dependent on Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu alone is the independent cause. Besides Brahman there is no other independent cause.

existed time, souls, etc. But these were under the sway of Viṣṇu.' So, the material with which and from which Viṣṇu produces the world existed; but they existed in dependence upon him.<sup>74</sup> In other words, Viṣṇu makes use of certain instruments in the production of the world; but the very determination that such or such beings should be instruments depend on his free will.<sup>75</sup> The freedom of the Lord is such that he could have created the world with or without auxiliary causes.<sup>76</sup> For example God uses 'prakṛti' as the material cause of the world just as a man, though capable of going on foot with no help, uses a stick for support, out of sport.<sup>77</sup>

Even if we accept the view that the various instruments used by Viṣṇu in the creation of the world in no way curtail his freedom, should we not at least admit that the law of *karma* limits his independence? Madhva accepts the position that Viṣṇu dispenses everything in accordance with the *karma* (*adṛṣṭa*) of each *jīva* and that world is so constituted as to be the best suited instrument of the *jīvas* to enjoy or to suffer, for their *karma*. Yet this does not limit the freedom of the Lord, thinks Madhva, because the very *karma* of the *jīva* depend on him. "Substance, karma, time, the essential nature of beings. *jīva* exist by his (Viṣṇu's) favour, in its absence they do not exist."<sup>78</sup> *Karma* by itself cannot produce effects, for it is an unconscious, material principle. To become effective, it must be subsumed by a conscious agent as an instrument. As Jayatīrtha points out: "If the very existence of *karma* is dependent of Viṣṇu, then in reality (the so

74. Tat. Dī. p. 274.

75. BSBh. II. 1. 15.

76. VTV. no. 457; AV. II. 1. 15,  
BSBh. II. 2.12. with the Tat. Dī. pp. 204-205.

77. Bh. G. Bh. IX. 8 prakṛtyavaśṭambhas tu yathā kaścit samartho' pi pādena gantum līlayā daṇḍam avaśṭabhya gacchati.

78. Bhāg. Pur. II. 10.12 dravyaṃ karma ca kālas' ca svabhāvōjīva eva ca yadanugrahataḥ santi na santi yadupekṣayā. (A. V. I. 1. 13; II. 1. 90 etc.).

called dependence of Viṣṇu on *karma*) there is no dependence at all."<sup>79</sup> Thus by bringing the age old inexorable law of *karma* under the sovereign freedom of the Lord, Madhva tries to save his supremacy and the general principle of retribution viz. each jiva gets what it deserves.

#### (f) The Creative Power and Activity of Viṣṇu

Though we have touched on this subject while discussing the divine attributes, still a few more remarks on the creative power and act of Viṣṇu are called for here, because they give us a deeper insight into Viṣṇu's nature and activity. Madhva says that the 'creative power of Viṣṇu is his essential power' (*svarūpasāmarthya*). This means that the 'causal power' of Viṣṇu is nothing but his nature. It is not different from him. As we have seen already, this power is called suprema power (*parā-śakti*). The creative power and the creative activity of Viṣṇu are identical with the nature of Viṣṇu. 'It is said that the attributes, action etc., of Viṣṇu are his nature (*svarūpa*); they are not different from him.'<sup>80</sup> Further, Viṣṇu as creator or producer of the universe is always "in *actu*." There is no passage from potency to act in Viṣṇu, since such a passage would do away with his independence and supremacy. Still, Madhva does admit different moments in the creative will of Viṣṇu (*icchā*). There is a creative or better an originating will and there is a 'dissolving-will' and these are effective only at the times of *śṛṣṭi* and *pralaya* respectively.<sup>81</sup> But it is to be noted that the *Vīṣeṣas* distinguishing the one homogeneous time-the times of creation, destruction and conservation depend on God's will. His actions do not depend on time's distinctions. The Lord not merely produces realities but effects also new specifications in time. So the instrument, time, which the Lord uses in the production of the world is totally dependent on him.

79. On BSBh. III. 2. 42; BSBh. III. 2. 42,

80. Cf. supra. p. 78 ff.

81. AV. II. 2.172 udīrayati kalākyāṁ śaktim ityasya vāgapi kālasya kālagatvena na virodho' pi kaścana asaṅkhyāta viśeṣatvād icchāyā api sarvadā.

### g. The Purpose of *sr̥ṣṭi* (creation)

From the 'creation' of the universe does Viṣṇu derive any utility (*prayojana*)? If Viṣṇu were to derive some profit from 'creation', then it would follow that before creation he lacked something and was therefore, not perfect. But that which is imperfect is not *Īśvara* and without *Īśvara* 'creation' is impossible. If, on the other hand, we were to say that Viṣṇu does not derive any profit from 'creation', then we would make Viṣṇu a non-intelligent being. According to the testimony of experience no intelligent being does anything without intending to obtain some profit or other. And if Viṣṇu were to act without such an aim then he would lack intelligence and his action would be fruitless. This once again would show that Viṣṇu is not perfect and hence not *Īśvara*. But without *Īśvara* no creation is possible. So in either case *sr̥ṣṭi* becomes impossible because the absolute and perfect nature of *Īśvara* is destroyed.<sup>82</sup> How, then, does Madhva escape this dilemma?

He does so by pointing out that Viṣṇu is absolute bliss. His desires are eternally fulfilled. So, as regards Viṣṇu, it is impossible to speak of a profit (*prayojana*) which has to be realised. Madhva says that 'creation' is not for the sake of acquiring something *na prayojanāya tr̥ṣṭih*.<sup>83</sup>

Why then does Viṣṇu produce the world? Experience tells us that an intoxicated man sings and dances not for the sake of gaining something, but out of sheer delight. Similarly, *Īśvara* engages in the activity of producing this world out of

82. BSBh. II. 1. 35 yat prayojanārtham śr̥ṣṭyādis tad ūnatvān na pūrnatā.

Tat. Dī. p. 189 nanu sr̥ṣṭyādāv Īśvarasya prayojanam asti vā na vā—

....

The difficulty is explained by Trivikrama.

83. Ibid. II. 1.33 athaiṣa eva paramāṇḍanda ityādina kṛtakṛtyatvān na prayojanāya sr̥ṣṭih.

play (*līlā*) and not for the sake of gaining even a 'particle' of profit (*prayojana*).<sup>84</sup>

This sport of Viṣṇu is rooted in his bliss. This is why Madhva so often says that the world arises out of the *ānanda* or *sukha* of Viṣṇu.

According to Madhva, then, the sufficient reason for God's activity is not to be sought outside of God. The (*finis operantis* (the end of the agent) can be viewed from two different angles: what the agent intends for himself and what the agent intends for the effect. Madhva says that Viṣṇu intends for himself, the 'divine-sport (*līlā*)', which is nothing but an overflow of the divine *ānanda*, is at the root of Viṣṇu's activity. This is clear from Madhva's statement that Brahman does not produce the world because of divine play (*līlā*) as though he were in need of such a play, or as though he derived some pleasure from such an activity. The free Lord acts because such is his blissful nature and his activity of creation is nothing more than an act of willing (*icchā*). What he intends for the effects is the liberation of the good and the damnation of the wicked.<sup>85</sup>

## II

### Viṣṇu and the Process of World's Origination.

In the works of Madhva, we do not find a systematic and unified treatment of this subject. According to the nature and contents of the text he comments on, Madhva oscillates from one cosmogonic myth to another and from the Pāñcarātra view of the evolution of the world from Viṣṇu to the Sāṃkhya idea of evolution. So some of the modern interpreters of Madhva like B.N.K. Sharma and K. Narayan do not mention

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84. *ibid.* II. 1.34

85. BSBh. I. 1. 14 Bliss is the root of Viṣṇu's activity. Madhva has not discussed in detail the 'end' Viṣṇu intends for the effects. The general orientation of his system seems to indicate the solution we have offered here.



the cosmogonic theories of Madhva at all. Still, I think that they must be taken into account here because nowhere do we see more clearly the influence of Madhva's faith in Viṣṇu's absolute supremacy as in his explanation of the world's origination and evolution.

Von Glasenapp discerns three strands within the cosmogonic view of Madhva. He exposes, first, the traces of Pāñcarātra cosmogony found in Madhva; then he deals briefly with the upaniṣadic myths Madhva uses; and finally he discusses the Sāṃkhya concept of evolution as the Mādhvas accept and interpret it. We can do no better than refer the reader to Von Glasenapp for details.<sup>86</sup> What interests us here is the way in which Madhva reinterprets the 'sacred tradition' which has come down to him, in accordance with the principles of his faith. His faith in Viṣṇu is the guiding principle of his textual interpretation, and hence also the unifying element of his cosmogonic thought. For example, Madhva cannot allow the various upaniṣadic myths to remain as they are, because many of them attribute the origin of the world to a principle other than Viṣṇu, and because they teach the real evolution (which implies change) of the ground principle. As a believer in the sacred tradition, he is not free to deny the myths, because they form part and parcel of that tradition. So, the only alternative left to Madhva and to the Vaiṣṇavas in general is the vaiṣṇavisation of the myths. This is exactly what the Vaiṣṇavas have done in the course of their history.<sup>87</sup> By the time of Madhva, this slow process must have been almost complete so that he could freely quote paurāṇic and pāñcarātra texts to prove his orthodoxy.

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86. H. Von Glasenapp *Op. Cit.* p. 43 ff.

87. P. Hacker in his "Prahlaḍa...." has given us a masterly account of the slow vaiṣṇavisation of the Prahlaḍa-legend. Prahlaḍa who originally was presented as a demon is transformed into the ideal devotee of Viṣṇu.

### 1. Vaiṣṇavisation of Cosmogonic Myths.

In order to substantiate the above statement, let us take two myths from the Br. Ā.Up. and see, very briefly, how Madhva reinterprets them. The first is the 'Water-Myth' which occurs in Br.Ā.Up 5.5.1. "Before all, in the beginning (agre) only the waters existed. The waters brought forth (emitted) the Truth or the real (*satyam*) Brahma (probably the neuter Brahman) is the Truth. Brahman emitted Prajāpati, Prajapati the other devas. Those gods revered only the Truth (Brahman)"<sup>88</sup>

This myth in its original form tries to explain the origin of the gods and the world from Brahmā, who in his turn is the product of the primeval waters. The whole terminology is emanationistic. Madhva does not comment on each word of the original text. He quotes a text from a work called '*Ādhāra*', to show us, how we should understand the meaning of this myth. The waters are to be identified with Nārāyaṇa, because he is the one who continually drinks all the good qualities. So he is called 'waters'. This Nārāyaṇa produces a second form of his self, viz., Vāsudeva. So, when the text says that Brahma is real, it intends to teach us that Vāsudeva is real. We know that for Madhva, Vāsudeva is a manifestation of Viṣṇu identical with him. From Vāsudeva, Brahmā is born and from him all the gods. This is the reason why all the gods such as Brahmā reverence Vāsudeva.<sup>89</sup> By this reinterpretation of the myth, Madhva puts the ultimate origin of all things in Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu. By introducing Vāsudeva into the second place, i. e., as a manifestation of Viṣṇu, he succeeds in joining the Pāñcarātra *Vyūha*-evolution of the world to the original

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88. Transl. R. E. Hume. The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads.

89. Br. Ā. Up. Bh. V. 5. 1. ff *sadā sarvaguṇāpānād āpo Nārāyaṇo smṛtaḥ dvitīyaṃ rūpam asṛjad Vāsudevaṃ sa ātmanah*

*tasmād Brahmājani tato devāḥ....*

*tasmād Brahmādayo devā Vāsudevam upāsate*

myth. The 'Brahma' of the original text is interpreted as *Brahmā*, an instrument in the hands of *Vāsudeva*, the Absolute Being. *Brahmā* and the gods are turned into worshippers of *Vāsudeva*.

In the first chapter of the *Br.Ā.Up* (I.2.1-5) there is another cosmogonic myth, which is more complicated than the one just discussed. *Madhva's* reinterpretation of the myth is not very enlightening, though the basic assumption of *Madhva's* exegesis is unmistakably clear here too.

"At first (*agre*) nothing whatsoever was there. This (*idaṁ* = world) was covered with death (*mṛtyu*), with hunger; for hunger is death. Then he thought to himself: 'Would that I had a self'? So, he went on praising; from him so praising water was produced...."

"Water was brightness. That which was the froth of the water became solidified. That became the earth. On it death tortured and practised austerity; its heat and the essence (*rasa*) turned into fire.

"He divided himself into threefold, one third fire, one third, the sun and one third, the wind...."<sup>90</sup>

Only a part of this extensive myth has been quoted here. But for the purpose of explaining *Madhva's* thought, what we have quoted is sufficient. Once again, there is no mention in the myth of a personal omnipotent principle as the source of the universe. A being, which could however, think and act, is the root of the world. The origination of the world is again explained in emanationistic terms.

*Madhva's* commentary on this text consist of a series of quotations from a number of unknown works like the *Brahmatarka*. He opens his comments with a citation from *Brahmatarka* which enumerates the various entities that existed during the period of dissolution (*pralaya*). They are, the all

destroying Viṣṇu, Lakṣmī, the souls, matter, time etc.<sup>91</sup> Viṣṇu, the first mentioned in this list, is given the epithet "all destroying" (*sarvasaṃhāraka*), i. e., death. So, Viṣṇu is called 'death' (*mṛtyuḥ*) because he destroys all. He is hunger, because he eats all beings.<sup>92</sup> This Viṣṇu pervaded and presided over all the entities during the whole period of dissolution. Since he was 'all alone' he willed to produce the waters. Being bodiless, he desired to have a body; so he produced the world which is called Viṣṇu's body, because it is under the control of Viṣṇu and because he dwells in it.<sup>93</sup> There is perhaps, no need to explain Madhva's interpretation any further. Once again, through ingenious etymological interpretations, Viṣṇu is established as "the first principle and root of all beings." The idea of emanation is changed into that of efficient causality by Madhva's insistence on the aspect of willing (*icchā*) and on the immanence of Viṣṇu in the various beings.

These two examples will suffice to show how Madhva's faith in Viṣṇu unifies the heterogeneous cosmogonic myths of the vedic and paurāṇic traditions. But the mādharma interpretation of the myths does not give us any systematic and definite idea of the process of the origination of the world. The only incontestable point that emerges is that Viṣṇu alone is the principle from whose act of willing all finite realities originate.

## 2. Madhva and the Pāñcarātra Cosmogony.

According to the Pāñcarātras, as explained by Schrader, Viṣṇu is both the efficient and material cause of the world. By his quality of 'ability' (*śakti*) Viṣṇu can become the mate-

91. Br. Ā. Up. Bh. I. 2. 1

92. *ibid.*

93. *ibid.* yataḥ svāyam evāsin nānyat ātmavān syām ity aicchat, śarīravān syām iti yato deha idam sarvaṃ tasya Viṣṇor adehinaḥ....etc.

rial cause of the world. His strength (*bala*) enables him to remain unchanged inspite of the fact that he is the material cause of the universe (*viṭāra-viraha*).<sup>94</sup> Secondly, the Pāñcarātrins explain the evolution of the world from Viṣṇu by means of intermediary evolutes such as *Vyūhas*, sub-*Vyūhas*, *Avatāras*, *Vibhāvas* etc.<sup>95</sup>

Madhva rejects the Pāñcarātra view that Viṣṇu can be the material cause of the world. For him, Viṣṇu is only its efficient cause.<sup>96</sup> Again, though Madhva accepts the *Vyūhas* (in a modified form) and the *Avatāras* of the Pāñcarātrins, he does not seem to have spent much time in trying to integrate their complicated evolutionary theories into his system, though references to them are not lacking in his works. Madhva's principal concerns centre round his ontological theology and not on cosmology. So the Pāñcarātra cosmological speculations get only a minor place in his thought. The esoteric tantric style of the Pāñcarātras do not find much favour with Madhva, though he places Pāñcarātra texts on a par with the Vedas.

### 3. Madhva and the Sāṃkhya Cosmogony

We may say in general that Madhva explains the process of the world's origination and its evolution in Sāṃkhya categories, though, he himself has not treated this subject in a systematic way. The long discussion of this topic to be found in Von Glasenapp<sup>97</sup> is not taken from Madhva's writings but from the works of later Dvaitins. But there is ample evidence in the writings of Madhva himself to show that he too thought of the evolution of the world in terms of Sāṃkhya categories.<sup>98</sup> Of course, Sāṃkhya (in its classical form) has no place for an Absolute Being. Primary matter with its three

94. O. Schrader. Op. Cit. p 31 ff.

95. *ibid.* pp. 27-89

96. Cf. Chapter I. part I.

97. H. Von Glasenapp. Op. Cit. p. 46 ff.

98. BSBh. I. 4, 27, 28; II. 3. 16 etc.



qualities, and the souls with their *karma* are thought to be capable of explaining the whole world process. Madhva, however, puts Viṣṇu above these principles and he ascribes to Viṣṇu the causality or the sufficient reason of the world-process.

When at the end of a *pralaya* (the world's dissolution), Viṣṇu desires to produce the world once again, he enters into matter which (as we have seen) is absolutely under his sway. During the whole period of its dissolution, matter has remained inactive in the perfect harmony of its three qualities. But the entry of Viṣṇu disturbs the harmony of the three qualities and causes a sort of disquiet in matter. From this 'disturbed matter' there arises in descending order *Mahat*, *Ahaṅkāra*, *Budhi*, *Manas*, the ten faculties (five sensory and five of action) the five sense-objects and the five gross elements. These 24 evolutes join together to form the 'World-Egg'.<sup>99</sup> Viṣṇu enters into this Egg and as a result of his activity the god Brahmā emerges from the Egg to become Viṣṇu's instrument for further 'creation'. Brahmā, who is indwelt and directed by Viṣṇu, produces the 14 worlds (7 above and 7 below). Gradually, all the unmanifest gods lying hidden in the Egg make their appearance. The ordinary souls, in strict accord with their past deeds, receive a body made by Brahmā. From the quality of 'darkness' *tamoguṇa* there arises the positive nescience which covers all the souls in their transmigratory existence.

As there is a hierarchy in the evolutes of matter, viz., *Mahat*, *Ahaṅkāra* etc., so too there is a hierarchy among the conscious beings. In descending order Madhva mentions the goddess Lakṣmī, then the god Brahmā, the goddess Sarasvatī, the gods Rudra, Vindra, Śeṣa. etc. But there are many such lists in Madhva and they do not always agree. The earlier a being originates 'in the world process', the higher is it in the scale of being and the longer he remains in

99. For details. H. Von. Glasenapp p. 46 ff.

existence. The higher a being is in the scale of existence the more divine favour does he receive.<sup>100</sup>

#### 4. The Manner in which Viṣṇu Exercises his Causality

That Viṣṇu does not create the world in the strict sense of word has already been mentioned.<sup>101</sup> The souls, matter, time etc., are eternal. What happens at the time of 'creation' are new combinations and changes and evolutions in these beings. The unmanifest becomes manifest and the manifest evolves into various forms taking on ever new *Vīṣeṣas*. All this happens under the influence and control of Viṣṇu. So we can say that Viṣṇu's action is 'an action upon' a being. The problem which now faces us, is this : in what way does Viṣṇu act upon these beings which are dependent on him ?

The first point to be noted in this connection is that Viṣṇu acts upon other beings by entering into them. "Viṣṇu is called '*prakṛti*' for he works eminently; he enters into matter and forms it differently." 'Viṣṇu enters into the primary matter and disturbs the equilibrium of its qualities; he enters into the World-Egg and activates it.<sup>102</sup> Madhva defends the existence of a body in Viṣṇu against the attacks of the Śaivites in order to ensure Viṣṇu's intimate contact with the world. The cause and the being upon which causality is exercised must be intimately connected. Madhva thinks that a bodiless being cannot enter into a causal relation with another being. This idea of Viṣṇu's entrance into a being as a prerequisite for his activity, is an essential idea of Madhva. The words : 'he desired to become many' means that the Lord

100. Br. Ā. Up. Bh. IV. Ch. Up. Bh. VII. 4-14

BSBh. II. 3. 14 pūrve, pūrve yato Viṣṇu sannidhānaṃ  
kramādhikam—  
sāmarthyādhikyam eteṣāṃ....

101. p. 99

102. Viṣṇu enters into 'prakṛti' and 'puruṣa'-BSBh. II.2.21  
prakṛtaṃ puruṣaṃ caiva praviśyaṃ kṣobhayāmāsa....  
Also BSBh. I. 4. 27; Kāth. Up. Bh. p. 16 BSBh.  
II. 3. 17

is infinitely rich endowed with infinite forms and attributes. The Lord desires to create the world in order to enter into it in his different forms. These forms are revealed in their different functions. The Lord thus guides all realities from their very interior.<sup>103</sup> He is the real inciter (*preraka*), the interior guide (*antaryāmin*) of the whole world, though the nature of the world is different from his reality.<sup>104</sup> The creative power of Viṣṇu is simple, though capable of infinite specifications. The power of the Lord enters into all beings and grants to each its own proper power. Thus he becomes the inner ruler of all (*antaryāmin*) "He is present in all, awakens in each its *śakti*."<sup>105</sup> Yet the Supreme Being remains independent. He alone possesses the unthinkable supreme power. The *śaktis* he grants to others is his. Yet he does not become the other beings for the power (*śakti*) is different from the nature of things. God in his eternal act of self-consciousness knows himself and his infinite forms. In that same act he desires to manifest them. He rules the many beings by his *śakti*, granted to each according to its nature.

Another point which must be noted in this context is that the indwelling Viṣṇu acts by his command or will. By his desire or will alone (*icchāmatrāt*) the Lord who is without any modification "creates" (the world). Such is the nature of the Infinite, by whom the world is produced with the qualities of *rajas* and so on. Using his body, by his will he, Janārdana created the world, after having destroyed it, as a father or mother or spider. Setting *prakṛti* into the movement of transformation, the Lord remains always without modifica-

103. AV. I. 4. 83. bahu syam iti tasyaiva hyuktamārgena yujyate/tattadgatena rūpeṇa tadarthaṃ hyasrjajjagat.<sup>2</sup>  
Cf also N. S. to A. V. 1. 4. 84.

104. Sarvam etad brahmetyucyate tadadhināsattāpratī-  
tītvātnatu svarūpatvāt.

105. AV. 1. 2. 2. tatra tatra sthito viṣṇus tattacchakti.  
prabodhakah/dūrato<sup>3</sup> pyatīśaktaḥ sa hlāyā kevalam  
prabhuḥ

tions."<sup>106</sup> (Jayatīrtha clearly points out that *prakṛti* when at the time of *pralaya* is reduced to the unmanifest *pradhāna* form, though called the body of the Lord never really becomes his essential body).

### III

#### Viṣṇu (Brahman) and the Reality of the Universe

In a very general and indefinite way we may say that the effect of the 'creative activity' of Viṣṇu is the production of the universe. We have already seen the progressive way in which Viṣṇu produces the world. Now we have to explain how Madhva conceives the support and dissolution of the world. But before we take up these two topics for discussion let us briefly explain Madhva's idea of the reality of the world.

The Monist affirms that the universe we see and experience is illusory. It has a certain practical reality as long as we are ignorant of the absolute truth. The only true reality is Brahman. Madhva, as we have seen in the first chapter, rejects this illusionism since it is contrary to the teaching of the sacred texts and to our experience. In practically every one of his works, Madhva has tried to refute the illusionism of the Advaitins. For Madhva, the reality of the universe is intimately related to the reality of Brahman (Viṣṇu) and so the denial of the reality of the world is a blasphemy against the Absolute Cause of all. This, in the end, is the reason

106. A. V. I. 4. 66 *icchāmātrāt prabhoḥ sṛṣṭir avikārasya sarvadā/Svabhāvo 'yam anantasya rajo yenābhav-ajjagad/Svadehād icchayā viśvam bhuktapūrvam janārdanaḥ/sasarjamātāpitṛvad ūṇanābhivad eva vā/pradhānaṃ parīṇāmyeṣo nirvikāraḥ svayam/sadā.*

Cf. also VTV. no. 457. The activity of Viṣṇu is the very nature of Viṣṇu.

BSBh. II. 1. 15 *savarūpasāmarthyād eva tasya sṛṣṭiḥ Tat. Di. 204* speaks of Viṣṇu's will to 'create' and 'to destroy'.

VTV. No. 267 The "icchā" of the Lord produces the world.

why Madhva is so vehement in his criticism of the advaitic position.

## 1. The Reality of the World

### (a) The World is Real.

The world (*jagat*) is real and its reality is testified to by the sacred texts. Madhva often quotes an anonymous text which says 'the self is real, the soul is real.'<sup>107</sup> No sacred text teaches the unreality of the world.<sup>108</sup> On the contrary, we find texts which say : 'the Supreme Being produced real beings which are countless.'<sup>109</sup>

But the Advaitins claim that the Upaniṣads teach the illusory character of the world. One of the chief texts on which they base their illusionism is to be found in the 6th chapter of the Cha. Up. Let us quote here the passage in question and examine the sām̐kara and the mād̐hva commentaries on it.

In order to understand the mād̐hva commentary, the context of the upaniṣadic passage must be explained. Śvetaketu, the son of Uddālaka began his studies at the age of twelve; at the age of twentyfour he returned home after having studied all the Vedas. The studies, however, made him conceited. He imagined himself to be a learned man. Seeing this, his father, Uddālaka asked his son Śvetaketu; 'My dear, since you are conceited, deem yourself learned and are puffed up, I presume, you must have asked about that, by which what is (hither to) unheard becomes heard, what is unthought thought, and what is understood, understood ? How, pray, is

107. VTV. no. 273 satya ātmā satyo jiv aḥ....

108. ibid. no. 257 na kutrāpi jagatom ithyātvam ucyate

109. ibid. no. 250

VTV. Tī. p. 211 na kevalam jagatomithyātvam kvāpi nocyata kintu—  
Śrutyādivākyaśamudāyāt satyatvam ca gamyata  
iti etc.



that rule, revered sir ?' said he. As, my dear, by clod of earth everything, made of earth would be understood : the appellation (of individual manifestations; of any particular product of earth) is a verbal handle, the real truth is simply 'earth'.<sup>110</sup>

Śaṅkara's commentary on the passage states : "in the world when a clod of earth which is the cause of pots etc., is known, all other things which are the products of the modification of earth are also known. By knowing the cause, the effect is known, because the effect is non-different from the cause." The modification (*vikāra*) is a mere appellation or name (a mere verbal handle). There is no such thing called modification. The reality is only the clod of earth.<sup>111</sup> From these few quotation from Śaṅkara's commentary, it is clear that the passage commented upon is interpreted monistically. Brahman, the cause alone is real, the effects are nothing but mere appellations. Cause and effect are in reality identical.

Madhva has commented on this passage both in his Ch. Up. Bh and in the VTV. The main ideas in both the commentaries are the same, though the commentary in VTV is more concise and to the point.<sup>112</sup> Madhva thinks that the whole teaching of Uddālaka is meant to impart to his young son the knowledge that Viṣṇu is the creator and that the world is the effect of his action. The father wants to instruct the son in the knowledge of the one, by which know-

110. Ch. Up. IV. 1. ff.

111. Ś. Ch. Up. Bh. IV. 4 na tv evam anyat kāraṇāt kāryaṁ  
kāraṇānanyatvāi kāryasya.  
vācāraṁbhaṇaṁ vāgālaṁbanam....  
na vikāro nāma vasto—  
asti paramārthataḥ, mṛttikaiva  
satyaṁ vastu asti  
Cf. ŚBSBh. II. 1. 14.

112. Ch. Up. Bh. IV. 1 ff. and VTV nos. 170 ff.

Madhva explains the context of the passage in VTV. no. 226.

"The father wants to destroy the pride of his son, by convincing him of his utter dependence on God."

ledge what is ununderstood becomes understood. Through the knowledge of the one, the knowledge of 'all' is attained. If 'all' should be unreal, then it would be absurd to speak of the knowledge of 'all' through the knowledge of the 'One'. Through the knowledge of the real (through true knowledge) one does not gain the knowledge of the unreal (unreal knowledge). On the contrary one attains the knowledge of the 'all' through knowledge of the 'One', because the 'One': (a) is the principal being (*prādhānyāt*) and because (b) there is some similarity between the 'One' and 'all', owing to the fact that the 'One' is the cause of 'all'.<sup>113</sup> When the dominant principle is known, the subordinate principles are known, as when a village is said to be known, invited or destroyed when the principal personages of the village are known, invited or destroyed.<sup>114</sup> Also, when the cause, viz., the father, is known, the son is taken to be known, as when we say 'I know him, he is the son of so and so'. In the same way we know the world when we know it to be the creation of Brahman, i. e., when the Supreme Being is known as the cause of the world.<sup>115</sup> So, the relationship between the 'One' and 'all' taught in the sacred text is not identity (which will make the world unreal), but the relationship of cause and effect (hence similarity), and the relationship of 'principal-subordi-

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113. VTV. no. 231 ekavijjānena sarvavijjānaṃ ca prādhānyāt kiṃcit sādṛśyāt kāraṇatvāc ca  
ibid. no. 233 na hi satyajjānena mithyajjānaṃ bhavati.

114. ibid. nos. 240 ff. pradhānajjānad apradhānasya  
jñātavad vyapadeśo' sty eva.  
yathā pradhānapuruṣāṇām jñāna....  
.... grāmo jñāta.... iti vyapadeśaḥ.

115. ibid. no. 243 kāraṇe ca pitari jñāte putro jñāta iti....  
vyapadeśaḥ  
ibid. no. 244 evam atrāpy etat sṛṣṭam....

nate status': the independence of Viṣṇu and the dependence of the world.<sup>116</sup>

But the text 'vācārambhaṇam vikāro....' thrice repeated by Uddālaka, seems to teach the identity of cause and effect and hence the unreality of the effect.<sup>117</sup> The mādḥva explanation of this sentence does not bring out the meaning of the text. 'The names that are produced by our speech are modifications i. e., changeable, non-eternal; the only unchanging and eternal name is *mṛitikā* (clay)'. What Madḥva means by this sentence, at least according to Jayatīrtha is this : only the Sanskrit names are unchangeable and eternal e. g., the name *mṛitikā*. These names are not produced but only manifested by our speech; non-Sanskrit names are, however, modifications. They are produced by our speech and so, are not eternal. Thus, Madḥva interprets the words of Uddālaka as a teaching on the relationship between Sanskrit and non-Sanskrit words.<sup>118</sup>

The sacred texts, while speaking of the world often use such terms as non-being (*asat* or *asatya*), untrue (*anṛta*), or illusion (*māyā*): They compare the world to dreams.<sup>119</sup> How should these terms and comparisons be interpreted ?

116. *ibid.* nos. 245-249

In. Ch. up. Bh. VI. 1 ff. The world is similar to Viṣṇu. *Kimu Viṣṇor bahor jñānād atyalpaṃ jagad idṛśam*, is known  
*ananyādḥinaviññānād anyādḥinaṃ tathaiva ca.*

Jayatīrtha in his VTV. Tī. p. 208 quotes Śaṅkara's Ch. Up. Bh. verbatim. His commentary on this section of VTV. is very informative. (pp. 197-211).

117. Ch. Up. IV. *vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam....*  
 Vide Śaṅkara's comments : above.
118. VTV. nos. 253 ff. and VTV. Tī. pp. 207-209  
 From the knowledge of Sanskrit we gain the knowledge of 'non-Sanskrit-words' just as the knowledge of the world is gained by our knowledge of Brahman.
119. VTV. no. 262 *svapnādisāmyaṃ jagat*  
*ibid.* 263 *māyāmayam jagat*

In the Scriptures, the term 'māyā' signifies 'intelligence' (*prajñā*) of Viṣṇu, says Madhva. So when it is said that the world is 'māyāmaya', the sacred texts teach us that the world is the product of Viṣṇu's intelligence.<sup>120</sup> Sometimes the world is denoted by the term 'anṛta' not because the world is false, but because it is pervaded by the Lord.<sup>121</sup> For, as Jayatīrtha states, the actuating force, Viṣṇu, pervades the world and hence it is called 'anṛta'. The term 'asatya' does not signify unreality or non-reality, but that reality, which owes its reality to 'a', namely, Viṣṇu.<sup>122</sup> The reality of the world has Viṣṇu for its ordainer and controller (*niyāmaka*), says Jayatīrtha. In as much as the world has no independent essential nature, it may be called 'asatya' (unreal). Viṣṇu alone is the reality of realities; the reality of the non-divine beings depends on Viṣṇu as the rainbow depends on the sun.<sup>123</sup> "Jayatīrtha remarks that just as the king is the cause of the riches of the wealthy persons, so is Viṣṇu the cause of the reality of living beings (souls) like Brahmā etc."<sup>124</sup>

As the intelligence of Viṣṇu is called *māyā*, so his will (*icchā*) is expressed by such terms as '*mahāmāyā*, *avidyā*, *niyati*,

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It is not clear to which texts Madhva is referring here. *Māyā* etc. must refer to Ch. Up. IV. *māyāmātram idaṃ sarvaṃ* etc.

120. VTV. no. 263 *prajñāvinirmitam yasmād ato māyāmayam jagat.*  
VTV. Tī. p. 213 *Māyā bhagavatprajñayā nirmitam*
121. *ibid.* no. 263 *anenānugataṃ yasmād anṛtaṃ*  
VTV. Tī. p. 214 *anena ceṣṭakena bhagavatā ṛtaṃ, gatam anugataṃ vyāptam.*
122. VTV. no. 263 "a" ity uktāḥ paro devaḥ tena satyam idaṃ jagat tadadhīnasvarūpatvād asatyam tena kathyate  
VTV. Tī. p. 214 Viṣṇu is the "satyatāyāḥ niyāmakah"
123. VTV. no. 263 *satyasya satyaḥ sa vibhur indracāpasya sūryavat...*
124. VTV. Tī. p. 214 for details. Jayatīrtha says that the 'life-breath' of Brahmā etc. depends on Viṣṇu.

*mohinī*, *prakṛti* and *vāsanā*.<sup>125</sup> Sometimes, these terms are utilised to express the very consciousness of Viṣṇu (*prajñāpti*). Hence, when the scriptures use these various terms in connection with the world, they impart the idea that the reality of the world is dependent on the intelligence, will and consciousness of the Lord. Jayatīrtha summarises this discussion with the remark that the above terms signify nothing but the dependent character of the reality of the world.<sup>126</sup>

Jayatīrtha writes : "In the Purāṇas etc., we read that the world resembles dreams; the world is like a dream chariot etc."<sup>127</sup> Does this mean that just as the dream knowledge is removed by the right, waking knowledge, so the world disappears when the right knowledge of the absolute dawns on us? Madhva, basing himself on the teaching of Paramopa-*niṣad*, says that the above comparison is not meant to teach the illusoriness of the world, but to describe the nature and characteristics of the world, which are the opposite of Viṣṇu's nature and characteristics. The world is ever changing, non-eternal full of misery and dependent on Viṣṇu. The world is not sublated by any knowledge, because it is always present to the consciousness of Viṣṇu.<sup>128</sup>

The reality of the world is based on the reality of Viṣṇu and his activity. "Viṣṇu, who is self-existent and independent, has created things which are real at all times. The instruments and actions of the great, real and supreme Lord

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125. VTV. no. 264

126. VTV. Tī. p. 214 na prāṇānām satyatvam apāra-  
mārthikaṃ bhavati kiṃtv tadahīnam eva.  
tastāś ca māyāmayam ity asya bhagavad-icchādhīnam  
etc.

127. VTV. Tī. p. 212 nanu purāṇādayaḥ svapnāmanoratho  
yatheti jagataḥ svapnādisāmyam ucyate tac ca  
jñānanivartyatvam nānyad asti.

128. VTV. no 262 anityatvavikāritvapāratantryādirū-  
pataḥ svapnādisāmyam jagato na tu bodhanivartyatā  
sarvajñasya yato Viṣṇoḥ sarvadaitat pratīyate.



are great and real.”<sup>129</sup> Now, if the result of the action is unreal, the action itself cannot be real. What Madhva and Jayatīrtha are trying to say here is the following : Viṣṇu is real, his action is real, therefore, the world which is the result of the real activity of the supremely real Viṣṇu must be real. As the sacred texts teach us : ‘the great Soul (Viṣṇu) has created a real world and so he is called : “he whose work is true” (*satyakarman*).’<sup>130</sup> This text may give us the impression that the reality of the action of Viṣṇu is derived from the reality of the effect. Logically, this may be the case, but ontologically, as the general context of Madhva’s thought clearly shows the opposite is the truth. The sentence which precedes the last citation states; “Only those who are ignorant of the supreme power of Viṣṇu say that the world is unreal.”<sup>131</sup>

The Advaitins often compare the Supreme Being to a magician and the world to an unreal magical show. The magical show or the things produced by the power of magic have no reality. They appear to us as real because we are ignorant of the magical power that envelops us.

Such an idea of God and of the world is totally repellent to the religious sense of Madhva. How can Viṣṇu, who is far from all unreal magic, be a magician ? How can the infinite Being, endowed with unthinkable powers, desire and will such an unreal creation ? Viṣṇu is the unchanging and eternal reality. He is without defects and full of attributes. How can he, so endowed and perfect, create something so despicable (*ninditaṃ*) ? Illusory creation is unbecoming to the Absolute Viṣṇu. Magicians resort to unreal productions because they are incapable effecting something real. Viṣṇu

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129. VTV, no. 258 & 259 Alo VTV. Ṭī. pp. 210-211.

130. VTV. 260 yas satyarūpaṃ jagad etad idṛk sṛṣṭva tu abhūt satyakarmā mahātmā.

Also VTV. Ṭī. p. 212

131. *ibid.* asatyam āhur jagad etad ajñāḥ saktiṃ  
Harer yo na viduḥ parāṇi hi.

has no need to resort to such despicable tricks, for he is omnipotent and hence he can produce real things.<sup>132</sup>

### **(b) The Reality of the World and Liberation.**

For the Advaitins. liberation, which is escape from illusion to truth, or from unreality to reality, is possible because bondage is unreal, illusory. If bondage were real and true, then release would be impossible.

Such a view of release is unacceptable to Madhva. 'It is not true that liberation is dependent on the illusoriness of bondage.'<sup>133</sup> For Madhva, bondage, i. e., the ignorance which chains the souls to misery is real and forms part of 'creation.' Liberation as taught in the very first Sūtra of the B. S., presupposes the reality of the soul, of bondage, and of the means for release. The reality of bondage does not make release impossible: on the contrary, it makes it real. As Viṣṇu is the cause of bondage, so, he is also the cause of release.

### **(c) The Impossibility of Proving the Unreality of the World.**

It is impossible, Madhva claims to prove the unreality of the world.

1. The Advaitin cannot appeal to experience in order to prove the unreality of the world, because our experience

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132. In his BSBH. Śaṅkara often compares Brahman to a magician (māyāvin) SBSBh. I. 1.17; 1.3.19; II. 1. 28 etc. Śaṅkara explicitly says that Brahman who is 'eka, kūtsthanityo, vijñānadhātuh' appears as many, just as a magician.

For Madhva's refutation of this position : Vide : Chapter IV. Part I.

Cf. also VTV. nos. 370-371. The magician does not see his own magical creations. But Viṣṇu sees the universe.

133. AV. I. 1.16 bandhamithyātvaṃ naiva muktir apekṣate  
Also S. Siauve . La Voie .... p. 49 fl.

unerringly testifies to its reality. No other means of knowledge can disprove the validity of direct experience, Especially, the direct experience of knowledge, ignorance, pleasure and pain and the uniqueness of the self can never be falsified. No amount of inferential reasoning can invalidate such direct experience. We are not entitled to argue from the existence of error to the illusory nature of the word. Firstly, because every illusory perception presupposes the previous knowledge of two similar realities. This means that if our experience of the world were unreal, then we should have had already perceived two similar real worlds.<sup>134</sup> Secondly, no error is possible in our perception of pleasure pain and our own self, because they are perceptions of the 'internal witness'.<sup>135</sup>

2. Can the Advaitins now resort to the sacred texts to prove their illusionism? But if sorrow and the other realities of the world should be unreal, then this unreality should, before all, affect the very text which declare the unreality. And one cannot establish that something unreal has the power to (prove) anything.<sup>136</sup> If everything else besides Brahman, be unreal, the Vedas too must be unreal. The irony of the situation is that the Advaitins claim to establish the truth of the unreality of the world through a means of knowledge which itself is unreal. Can an unreal proof convince anyone?<sup>137</sup>

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134. VTV. no. 345 bhrāntikalpitatve ca jagataḥ satyaṃ jagaddvayaṃ apekṣate.

135. *ibid.* nos. 396, 398.

136. AV. I. 1.17 mithyātvam yadi dukhādes tad vākya-sya-grato bhavet  
mithyāyāḥ sādhatvaṃ ca na siddham prativādinḥa

Also *ibid.* 18. Cf. NS. to this passage.

yadi cedam vākyaṃ mithyā syāt tathā'pi  
na dukhāder mithyātvam pratipādayet

137. AV. I. 1.18 tac ca mithyāpramāṇena satā vā sādhyate tvayā.

3. Finally, can inference prove the unreality of the world? The Advaitin's answer to this question is a clear, yes Madhva in his Mithyātvānumānakhaṇḍana summarises the reasoning of the Monists in the following way: The world is unreal (*mithyā*) (1) because it is perceived, (2) because it is material in nature (*jaḍatvāt*), (3) because it is finite, multiple in point of time, place and reality. (*vimatam mithyā, drīṣyatvāt, jaḍatvāt, paricchinnavāt*)<sup>138</sup>

The first reason, 'because it is perceived' (*drīṣyatvāt*) is thus explained by Śaṅkara himself in his commentary on the Māṇḍ. Karika II, 4: "The object of the waking experience are false, because they are perceived, like the objects of dream experience."<sup>139</sup> By the later Advaitins the same reasoning is adduced to prove the unreality of the world but with the example of error. "Our experience of the world is false because it is perceived, like the rope-snake or shell-silver in erroneous cognition."<sup>140</sup>

A clear examination of the three reasons brought forward by the illusionists to prove the illusory character of the world will show us that they are derived directly from their conception of truth and reality. For them, the essence of truth and reality lies in absolute non-contradiction. As we have noted in the first chapter, such a conception of truth and reality necessarily leads us to the conclusion that reality is eternal, infinite, and truth the identity of knower, knowledge and object; in other words pure luminosity.<sup>141</sup>

138. Mithyātvānumānakhaṇḍana. 'Vimatam' is everything other than Brahman.

Also Vādāvalī, p. 1.

139. Ś. Māṇḍ. Kārikābh. IV. 2.

140. The Advaita inference with three "probans" (*hetu*) i.e. perceptibility, inertness and finitude is to be found in Ānandabodha (circa 1100). This inference became the centre of Advaita-Dvaita controversy in the post-mādhva-period.

141. Cf. Chapt. I.

Madhva wholly rejects this view of truth and reality and hence also all the reasons adduced by the Advaitins to prove the unreality of the world. In the *Mithyātvānumāna-khaṇḍana*, Madhva concentrates his attention on the logical defects of the inference put forward by his adversaries. In fact, in the treatise mentioned, he deals only with the first inference.<sup>142</sup> In his VTV and AV he refutes the other two. Jayatirtha consecrates the major part of his work *Vādāvalī* to the refutation of these three inferences.<sup>143</sup> Here we shall deal with the first inference only, since Madhva and even his later commentators have specially picked it out for refutation.

The first objection Madhva has against this inference is that it is absurd. No sane man will try to prove that the 'sky-lotus is fragrant, because of its 'lotusness', for the simple reason that the major term, viz., the sky-lotus in which fragrance is supposed to exist is non-existent. Of a non-existent being, one cannot predicate any reality (*atrayāsiddhi*). In the same manner, the world according to the Advaitin is 'ex supposito' false, non-existent and hence it is not possible to predicate anything of it.<sup>144</sup>

The Advaitin has of course a ready answer to this objection. The world is neither real, nor unreal, but indeterminate (*anirvacanīya*). Madhva's objection presupposes the absolute unreality of the world, a position not held by all the Monists.<sup>145</sup>

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142. *vimatam mithyā, drśyatvāt*

143. The arguments which lies scattered in the works of Madhva are gathered together by Jayatirtha in his *Vādāvalī*. pp. 55.

*Vādāvalī*, pp. 1-55 From p. 80 on. Citsuka's inference is refuted.

144. *Mithyātvānumānkhāṇḍana. gaganāravindam surabhi, arvindatvāt, yathā sarojakamalavat.*

145. A later Advaitin like Prakāśānanda (15th-16th cent.) held the view of the absolute unreality of the world. (p. Hacker, *Vivarta*, p. 49 ff)



But Madhva has no difficulty in picking holes in this advaitic idea of indeterminability. Madhva asks the Advaitin what he understands by the 'indeterminable reality' of the world. The Advaitin naturally cannot define it. He says that it is 'inexplicable'. But is it not a rule in every inferential reasoning that the proposition should be absolutely clear and well defined? The Advaitin is trying to predicate falsity of something which by definition is inexplicable, unknown.<sup>146</sup>

The middle term of every syllogism must be true and real in order that we may infer from it another reality. From real smoke, we can conclude to real fire. But none can argue to the existence of 'golden fire' from 'goldensmoke', because such a smoke is non-existent. In the same way the reason adduced by the Advaitins for the unreality of the world, viz., its perceptibility, because forming part of the unreal world, as unreal and hence invalid (*asiddha hetu*).<sup>147</sup>

If 'perceptibility' necessarily implies the unreality of the object perceived, then the self must also be unreal, for it is perceived. This is surely not acceptable to the Monist. Does this not mean that the middle term of the inference is invalid?<sup>148</sup>

Madhva remarks sarcastically, that the Advaitic reasoning is similar to the following inference. Fire is not hot, because it is a product. But our incontrovertible experience proves the contrary. So too our experience, especially the infallible testimony of our consciousness, witnesses to the reality of the

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146. Mithyātvānumānakhaṇḍana. This defect is known as "aprasiddhaviśeṣaṇatā".

For details. Vādāvalī, p. 8 f.

147. *ibid.*

148. *ibid.* There are also other fallacies of "hetu" such as "viruddhahetu", "anaikāntikahetu" etc. These are discussed by Madhva in the treatise mentioned above.

world.<sup>149</sup> These are a few of the logical defects which vitiate the inference put forward by the Advaitins.

Thus Madhva has, from his realistic standpoint, refuted the advaitic contention that the world of our daily experience is unreal. Neither from the sacred texts nor from perception or inference can we prove that the world is unreal. On the contrary, all the sources of knowledge unanimously reveal the reality of the world. The Monist's opinion that the world is 'different from reality and non-reality', or that 'the world's reality is an inexplicable reality' does not possess any validity because the existence of such a reality is not proved by any source of knowledge. Rather, the world is ontologically real, because Viṣṇu and his actions are real.

We must now explain three other points in connection with the relationship of Viṣṇu to the universe. Viṣṇu is not only the cause of the origination of the world; he is also its supporter, ruler and destroyer (*sthiti*, *niyati* and *pralaya*). Though the deeper aspects of some of these functions can be treated only after the exposition of Madhva's anthropology, still we can venture on a reasonably adequate explanation of the subject now.

## 2. Viṣṇu the Cause of the 'Sustenance' (*sthiti*) and 'Ruling' (*niyati*) of the World.

The second of the Brahma-Sūtras of Bīdarāyaṇa ("That from which the birth.... B. S. I.1.2) affirms according to

149. *ibid.* ātmano'pi drśyatvāt (anaikāntikaḥ)

Jaya. Tī. ātmanah drśyatvaṃ vartate/yataḥ ātmīpi mithyā.

*ibid.* vahnir anuṣṇaḥ kṛtakatvāt....

(bādhita-hetu)

If the world is unreal, then there is no way to prove it. Every proof that is utilised to prove the unreality of the world participates in this universal unreality. Moreover, any attempt to bring in a "middle-entity" between reality and non-reality is against the principle of the excluded-middle. Here we have a summary of the mādḥva-arguments against the Advaitins.

Madhva, among other things, that Viṣṇu is the supporting cause (*sthiti*), that he is the ruler and finally the destroyer of the world.<sup>150</sup> As Madhva himself says : "If it is said that both the production and the destruction (of the world) depend on Viṣṇu, but its continuation in existence (*sthiti*) depends on its own proper nature, without any reference to him (Viṣṇu) that is not correct, for the very nature of all (beings) depend on him."<sup>151</sup>

The word '*sthiti*' derived from the root *sthā* 'to stand' may be translated as 'permanence in being.' What then does Madhva mean by saying : "Viṣṇu is the cause of the 'permanence' of the world?" As far as I know, he has neither defined this term nor explained it in his writings, though he repeatedly predicates it of Viṣṇu along with the other cosmic and salvific functions such as the origination and destruction of the world and the bondage and liberation of the souls. 'That person from whom there arise the origination, support, ruling, destruction, knowledge, ignorance, bondage and release' is Hari, is a sort of Vaiṣṇava 'catechetical formula', which Madhva accepts and utilises without much explanation. Both Trivikrama and Jayatīrtha disappoint us, if we look for a clear and consistent explanation of these terms in their commentaries. So, we have to be satisfied with the stray remarks we find in Madhva and in his commentators and with the help of these try to see what Madhva really means when he says that Viṣṇu is the support and ruler of the world. Von Glasenapp's treatment of this topic does not go beyond a material description of the statements of Madhva.<sup>152</sup>

Jayatīrtha while commenting on the 2nd Sūtra of the B.S., makes the following remarks. "That which has received its origin from Viṣṇu is also sustained by him. The causality

150. BSBh. I. 1.2; AV. I. 1.90.

151. *ibid.*

152. H. Von Glasenapp : Op. Cit. p. 50 f.

of origination etc., specially rests with Viṣṇu. He alone is the support of the primary matter, souls and time; he supports the earth, heaven and all the worlds. Also, he is the ruler of everything."<sup>153</sup> In his commentary on the 2nd part of the VTV, Jayatīrtha makes certain precisions. "Concerning the souls, origination signifies the production of the body, 'sthiti' means the permanence of the soul in the bodily state, 'niyati' stands for the binding of the soul by means of injunctions and prohibitions. As regards the immortal gods, their birth consists in their 'appearance', their 'sthiti' in the absence of death, their 'niyati' in their subordination to the commands of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu grants to the different beings their activities too."<sup>154</sup> All these functions have their origin in Viṣṇu. From these remarks of Jayatīrtha, it appears that for Madhva the 'sthiti' of the world signifies the permanence of the world in its manifest state, owing to the supporting causality of Viṣṇu ( *dhāraakatvam* ). The formula quoted above, which says that Viṣṇu is the cause of the origination, permanence and ruling of the world applies only to the manifest world. Madhva has not asked the question whether the eternal beings in their unmanifest state, at the time of dissolution are supported and ruled by Viṣṇu. Madhva, of course, admits that they are dependent on Viṣṇu. But as remarked above, Madhva

153. Tat. Pr. on BSBh. I. 1. 2.

AV. III. 2. 166 ff. *sṛṣṭināśan tadhānāvitīrite / svabhāvatvāt sthiter naitad apekṣati na yujyate / yatas svabhavo 'pyakhilā īśayatto' khilasya ca*  
All beings, their proper nature and attributes depend on Viṣṇu. No finite being has autonomous powers. The Lord activates all their powers. God not only causes the being and makes them act according to their nature but grants them the power to be known. This means that our knowledge is granted by the action of the Lord. We are also known because of the action of the Lord.

AV. II. 2. 35-36, and N. S. on these Verses.

154. VTV. Tī. pp. 342-343. *j.vānaṃ sargo dehasṛṣṭiḥ, sthitir dehādhiṣṭānena avasthānaṃ, kṣyao maraṇaṃ, yatir vidhiniṣadhabhyāṃ bandhaḥ....*

does not necessarily connect causality with dependence. Origination, support of the world etc., are explicitly called the results or effects of Viṣṇu's causality. But the 'being and permanence in being of the eternal entities' are not said to be the effects of Viṣṇu's causality, though they are eternally dependent on Viṣṇu.

Another point to be noted here is this : as *śrṣṭi* is not explicitly said to be the gift of radical existence, so '*sthiti*' is not affirmed the continued gift of existence. The 'conservation or creatio continua' taught by the Scholastics and the '*sthiti*' admitted by Madhva are not exactly the same, just as the 'creato' of Christian Scholastic philosophy and the '*śrṣṭi*' of mādhva philosophy are not the same.<sup>155</sup>

Let us now examine the supporting and ruling functions of Viṣṇu a little more closely. "Viṣṇu is called 'a', for through him this real world is. He is the reality of reality (*satyasya satyam*); this all-pervading Lord is like the sun to the rainbow."<sup>156</sup> Jayatīrtha explains the last sentence by saying that 'Viṣṇu is the ordainer of reality, and that, generally, without the sun the rainbow does not arise.'<sup>157</sup> What Madhva intends to teach here, is the following: "Viṣṇu's reality and the origination and continued existence of the world are 'somehow intrinsically related.' But how? Commenting on BS. I. 3, 10, Madhva at first quotes Br. Ā Up V, VIII, 2. 'Indeed in this imperishable, o Gargi, the sky is woven warp and wof'. Madhva says : "The Imperishable is Viṣṇu, and he supports all."<sup>158</sup> To the question how Viṣṇu supports the the world, an answer may be found in the two lines of T. A. III, 14 quoted by Madhva. "The one lord, being the supporter is supported. He supports all by being present in (them)

155. Supra Viṣṇu and the Origination of the world,

156. VTV. no. 263 'a' ityuktah paro devaḥ tena satyam idam jagati ....  
satyasya satyaḥ sa vibhur indracāpasya sūryavat

157. VTV. Tī. p. 214.

158. BSBh. I. 3.10.



in many ways", Trivikrama comments : "Hari is said to be supported by the world as the world is supported by him. Viṣṇu is the primary or root supporter (*muladhāraka*)."<sup>150</sup> The T. A. says further : "When the Lord, not wishing to support the burden of the world, puts it down, then the world disappears." This text in its original meaning seems to compare Brahman to a carrier of burden, who supports the burden extrinsically. But Trivikrama has interpreted the text from a more philosophical angle. He says that Viṣṇu supports the world by his presence in the different beings.<sup>160</sup>

In the commentary on the next sūtra, the divine activity of supporting the universe is more personalised. "The supporting of the world is by the command of Viṣṇu", for it is taught in the Br. Ā Up. V. VII. 9. : 'at the command of the imperishable the sun and moon stand supported. By the command of Viṣṇu alone the various worlds are supported.'" Now, we are in a position to answer the question : how does Viṣṇu support the world? Viṣṇu who is present in every being, supports each being by his command. The interpretation of Madhva is confirmed by the following text quoted by him in B. S. Bh. I. 2. 6. "I, Guḍākeśa, am the self abiding in the heart of all beings."<sup>161</sup> I, having entered the world, support the beings by power."<sup>162</sup>

As Viṣṇu uses various instruments in the work of producing the world, so he uses inferior beings in his work of supporting the world. Madva accepts the view, that each

159. *ibid.* I. 3.10 The text is quoted only in the Bombay edition, and not in Nāga Rāja Sharma's edition.

Tat. Dī. p. 117 Viṣṇur jivair hṛdi bhriyamānaś ca bibharti.

yady api Harir jagatā bhriyata ity  
ucyate jagati vyāptatvāt.  
jagad bibharti ca....

160. *ibid.* tasyaikasya bahurūpatayā niviṣṭatvāt.

161. Bh. G. X. 20.

162. An unknown text.

element has its own presiding deity. In B. S. Bh. II. 1.6-7. he says that the presiding deities of earth etc., have exalted powers, though they are eternally dependent on Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is the Self of these gods and he dwells in their hearts.<sup>163</sup> Not only do the elements have their deities, but also the faculties of action and knowledge, such as the five senses and hands and feet and the objects of these faculties have their 'patronal deities.' In fact the mind (*manas*) has three presiding deities : Rudra. Vindu and Śeṣā.<sup>164</sup> At the order of Vāsudeva, the gods induce the jīvas to perform good and evil actions (Vāsudeva ājñayā caiva pūrvakarmānusārataḥ/Prerayanti hi te jīvān puṇyapāpeṣu nityaśaḥ (AV. III. 4.259). Sarasvati is said to be the deity of intelligence (*buddhi*) and Lakṣmī the presiding goddess of the unmanifest primary matter. All these innumerable gods have a subordinate and dependent role to play in the vast work of supporting and ruling the universe.

As Viṣṇu is the supporting cause of the universe, so is he the cause of the activity of the beings by his 'effective presence' in the various potencies of these beings. Viṣṇu is present in the heart and at the root of the hearing faculty; he is present in the eyes and in all the senses. Those persons possessing salvific knowledge (*jñānins*) know that all the activities are from Viṣṇu, indwelling in them.<sup>165</sup>

The activities of non-conscious beings are also ultimately dependent on Viṣṇu. In the Chan Up. Bh VII, XIV, it is said that the gods present in the medicinal herbs make them effective.<sup>166</sup> Again, while refuting the Sāṃkhya in B. S.

163. BSBh. II. 1. 6-7 These deities are called 'abhimāni-devatā'

They have 'viśiṣṭam sāmarihyam, acintyaśakti' etc.

164. Kath. Up. Bh. III. 10-11.

165. Mund. Up. Bh. III. 1. 4.  
BSBh. II. 2. 3.

166. Ch. Up. Bh. VII. 14 The whole passage is a series of quotations joined together by 'iti ca'. The sources from which he has drawn the quotations are not known.

Bh II. 2.3, Madava asserts that such activities as the turning of milk into curd and the flow of waters are caused by Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu alone. And commenting on Rg V. X, 112,9 : "Except by thee, whether near or far off, nothing is done by anybody." Jayatīrtha says that Viṣṇu's causality in all the actions (of other beings) is taught by the sacred texts.

About Viṣṇu's action of ruling the world, Madhva himself has not said much. With regard to the souls, as we have seen above, Viṣṇu's act of ruling them consists in binding them by means of injunctions and prohibitions.<sup>167</sup> By this, the Mādhvas surely mean the rules of sacrifice, caste norms etc. Since all beings are dependent on Viṣṇu, as regards their essential nature, activity and knowledge, he is said to be the king and lord of beings. A verse from the Skanda Purāṇa quoted in B. S. Bh I. 3, 16, calls Viṣṇu 'the overlord of all (*sarvādhīpati*), the protector of all (*sarvapaṭa*) and lord of all (*sarveśa*).'<sup>168</sup> Madhva citing Brahmatarka says that the very essence of the gods depend on Viṣṇu. Hence Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu) is proclaimed the ruler. To rule means to confer existence and proper nature on beings. So ruling or governance is something interior. It is not merely a control analogous to that of a king. (N. S. 1.2.16)

### 3. Viṣṇu and the Dissolution (*pralaya*) of the Universe.

A good exposition of this point, especially of its mythological aspects is to be found in Von Glasenapp's work.<sup>169</sup> Hence we intend to make here only a few remarks which will throw some light on our theme, viz., the mādhva concept of God.

Just as Viṣṇu is the cause of the origination of the world, and its supporting cause and ruler, so is he the cause of its

167. VTV. Tī. p. 342-343.

168. BSBh. I. 3.16.

Tat. Dī. p. 123.

169. H. Von. Glasenapp. Op. Cit. p. 51 ff.

dissolution. What is meant by the last part of this formula is that beings which have originated from, and are supported by Viṣṇu, do not disappear by themselves; the cause of their disappearance or reabsorption is Viṣṇu. As in the origination, support and ruling of the world, so in its dissolution too, Viṣṇu's causality (*karṣṭvām*) is at work, "He who was at the beginning of the world (of the manifest world) and from whom the world originated and who protects the world, from him is the dissolution of the world."<sup>170</sup>

As regards ordinary souls, (souls in body) dissolution (*pralaya*) stands for death.<sup>171</sup> For all beings, however, dissolution means the reabsorption into the unmanifest state. It is to be noted here that Madhva, like other Vedāntins, admits a partial and a total dissolution. The partial dissolution or reabsorption affects only the three worlds, viz., the *Bhū*, *Bhuvā* and *Svarga lokas*, although the gods dwelling in these worlds are not touched by it. But the total dissolution affects the whole universe. The process of dissolution is exactly the opposite of the process of origination; the inferior beings are absorbed into the superior and finally the whole is covered over by Viṣṇu. According to the Br. Ā. Up. L. 2.1., 'Lakṣmī', the souls, prime-matter in the perfect harmony of its three qualities (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), actions and the residue of actions, life breath, the five senses (the internal senses), the Vedas and time remain in an inactive and unmanifest manner all through the long night of dissolution.<sup>172</sup>

The general principle of origination from being (*satāutpattiḥ*) and destruction with a residue, or better, the

170. Tat. Dī. p. 88.

171. VTV. Tī. p. 343.

172. Br. Ā. Up. Bh. I. 2.1.

BSBh. II. 1. 10 sata utpattiḥ saśeṣavinaśaś ca hi loke dṛṣṭaḥ.

ibid. II. 1.9 pralaye sarvāsattvaṃ na yujyate.

impossibility of annihilation (*saśeṣavināśa*), to which we referred to in the section on 'ṛsti', holds good here too.<sup>173</sup> The dissolution of the world, even its total dissolution does not mean annihilation. As Madhva says, we never experience total destruction, i. e., a destruction which does not leave some residue behind. So we are not entitled to speak of a total absence of reality at the time dissolution. Jayatīrtha's *Tattvaparakāśikā* uses the example of the destruction of a pot to explain this general principle. Still, Jayatīrtha makes a very puzzling remark in his NS. Madhva while explaining the 2nd Sūtra of the B. S., says that the sacred texts always apply the expression 'absence of defects' to Viṣṇu alone, whereas they predicate ignorance, dependence and '*non-existence at the time of pralaya*', of the souls.<sup>174</sup> What interests us here are Madhva's words '*pralaya*' '*bhāva*' (non-existence at the time of *pralaya*) because Jayatīrtha explains them as 'not mere non-manifestation' but 'non-existence' (*abhāva eva*). This sentence seems to contradict what he himself has said in his commentary on the B. S. Bh. Does he teach here, then, that during the time of *pralaya* the souls pass into non-existence? In the absence of other passages which explain the sentence quoted above, it is impossible to know exactly just what Jayatīrtha held. But the view, that at the time of dissolution, beings pass into total non-being goes against the general trend of Mādhvism.

Just as Madhva has not asked the question; whether Viṣṇu can really create a being out of nothing," so he has also never explicitly posited the question whether Viṣṇu could annihilate an existing being. The general principle that every destruction leaves some sort of a residue behind, seems to deny the possibility of total destruction or annihilation. Still, Madhva's idea of the destruction of ignorance makes us doubt about the universal validity of this general principle

173. AV. I. 1. 96. *ajñānaṃ pāratantryaṃ ca pralaye 'bhāva eva ca*.

174. S. Siauve, Op. Cit. pp. 51-52.



about destruction. We know that for the Mādhvas the ignorance that chains the souls to the state of bondage is positive (*bhāvarūpājñāna*), and that this ignorance and hence bondage also are caused by the action of Viṣṇu. At the same time, Viṣṇu is the giver of liberation. By the power of his 'grace', the positive ignorance is destroyed and thus release is attained. The destruction of ignorance is said to be the 'breaking of its essence' (*svarūpadhvamsa eva*). Jayatīrtha says that the destruction of the beginningless positive ignorance can be accomplished only by Viṣṇu, for he alone possesses the infinite power needed to accomplish what has not been accomplished by others. This statement is indeed intriguing, because, regarding the destruction of ignorance, Madhva tacitly and Jayatīrtha openly seem to admit the total destruction of a positive reality.

## CHAPTER V

### VIṢṆU AND MAN

Books on the philosophy of Madhva usually, consecrate a chapter to the exposition of the mādharma concept of finite spiritual beings or souls. K. Narain, for example, entitles the section of his book on Madhva, which deals with the topic of Man : 'The Madhva Conception of Individual Soul.'<sup>1</sup> B. N. K. Sharma speaks of 'Madhva's Doctrine of Ātman.'<sup>2</sup> Von Glasenapp is satisfied with the title 'Madhva's Teaching on the Soul.'<sup>3</sup> S. Siauve consecrates the last chapter of her book to : "Dieu et les Sujets Spirituelles."<sup>4</sup> While dealing with the topic, they briefly expose Madhva's views on the embodiment of the soul, in other words, his views on the 'human situation' of the soul. But man and his situation get only very little attention here. The reason for this lies in the very Hindu conception of man. Man's body is not considered worthy of too much attention and study, because in the scale of beings it has no great value, since it is material in nature. Man's liberation consists in the soul's escape from its bondage to matter.

For our part however, we are interested in studying how Madhva looked at man as man-i. e.,-the concrete Body-Soul composite being. In other words, the subject of our study in this chapter is 'Madhva's Anthropology.' But we shall study this topic from the philosophical and theological angles in as much as such a study is helpful to our understanding of God.

1. Narain K. An Outline of Mādharma Philosophy. p. 139
2. B. N. K. Sharma. Op. Cit. p. 177
3. H. Von Glasenapp Op. Cit. p. 54
4. Siauve S. La Doctrine de Madhva. p. 331 ff

Man first of all, is conditioned by his dependence on God. So, to understand man we have to know who God is. This we have done in our previous chapters. Man, according to Madhva, is a composite being. He is a finite, spiritual being, existing here and now in a body, or rather in bodies. The body of man however, is an evolute of matter. This fact forces us to look into the nature of matter. Man exists in a milieu. He exists in a world which is in time and space and he is surrounded by other human beings. Man is a member of a society. Man is subject to birth and death; he is an agent and 'enjoyer'; he lives in the midst of a world where inequalities and evils exist. So, the human situation is tremendously complicated, and the complexity of 'human existence' becomes all the greater when we try, to study man in his relationship to God and to other men and to the world. In a very modest way, we wish to enquire how Madhva has tried to pose such problems, and how he has answered them. Some of the problems we raise in this chapter might appear modern. But we shall certainly try not to read modern ideas into Madhva's texts. Our only intention is to point out those insights of Madhva which will throw light on man in his total existential situation, especially on man's relationship to God.

## I

### **The Milieu in which Man Exists**

All beings exist in a world. Man is no exception to this rule. For the realist and pluralist Madhva, the world or better the worlds are real and the realities in them are many. Except Viṣṇu, all the realities are in a constant process of becoming. Ultimately, Viṣṇu is the reason for the reality, multiplicity and becoming of all beings. But more proximately, though in dependence on Viṣṇu, space and time are the two essential conditions that account for the multiplicity and becoming of things. So we shall explain now the mādhva understanding of space and time and see how they are related to Viṣṇu and to things.

### Space (ākāśa)

Madhva accepts the existence of two types of space (*ākāśa*). One is called unmanifest space (*avyākṛta ākāśa*) and the other gross, or element space (*vyākṛta or bhūta ākāśa*).<sup>5</sup> These terms might give the impression that one is unmanifest space and the other the manifest state of the former. Such is not the meaning of the words. There are two "spaces". The *avyākṛta ākāśa* is said to be without colour and form, eternal, infinite and unproduced. The *vyākṛta ākāśa* is the element (*bhūta*) *ākāśa* with colour, divisions, and originated out of the transformation of *prakṛti*. It is produced at the beginning of each period of *śṛṣṭi* (creation). The element *ākāśa* like all the other material elements—wind, fire, water and earth—enter into the composition of the bodies of the universe in various proportions. It, in its subtle, isolated state is known only to the divinities—Viṣṇu and the presiding deities.<sup>6</sup> It is in the *avyākṛta ākāśa* all things exist. This space is an infinite, all pervading, substantial reality distinct from the objects contained in it. Madhva says that its sole function is "to make place" for objects *avakāśamātram ākāśaḥ*.<sup>7</sup>

The Dvaitins reject the Jaina view which says that space is known by perception in as much as movements of objects are perceived. Since space is not endowed with colour or form it cannot be perceived. Moreover, the very perception of movement presupposes the knowledge of space. So the knowledge of space is pre-given to *pratyakṣa*. The Dvaitins are not ready to accept the nyāya-vaiśeṣika theory either, which says that space is known through inference. The complicated refutation of this theory is not of great impor-

5. AV. II. 3.14 ff. Bhūtam apyāsitaṃ divyadr̥ṣṭigocaram eva tu / utpadyate vyākṛtaṃ hi gaganam sākṣigocaram / pradeśa itī vijñeyam nityam notpadyate hi tat.

6. N. S. to II. 3.14 Cf. also A. V. II. 3.13

7. AV. II. 3. 11 f. avakāśamātram ākāśaḥ katham utpadyate....

tance for us, and so I do not intend to explain it here.<sup>8</sup> According to the Dvaitins then, space is intuited by the Sākṣin.<sup>9</sup> Only the Sākṣin is capable of perceiving the limitless and the infinite.<sup>10</sup> Space is infact limitless in its greatness (*mahattvam*) and in its minuteness (*aṇutvam*). In the present instant the infinity of space is seen by the Sākṣin.

Space is real. If it were unreal (*abhāva*) then it should have a support and a counter entily (*pratīyogin*). What can be the support of the non-existence of space but space? Is it possible to think of non-space? Space cannot have either a prior or a posterior *abhāva* (non-existence). So space is given to our consciousness as an absolute. It is not related to other beings for its existence (Of course its dependence on Viṣṇu is not denied by this). Space does not allow any *non-space* or nothingness to exist within it. The very divisions of space are space. Even before the production of the world, space exists containing within it the directions and the possibility of diverse places because of which, it (space) can receive into it the multiplicity of objects.

Directions (*dik*) are also the objects of Sākṣin and are said to be the parts (*bhāga*) of *avyākṛta-ākāśa*. They are also called the natural or essential members of space (*svābhāvika avayava*)<sup>11</sup> As the directions, so the diverse places (*deśa*) are essential to space and not the result of external adjuncts (*upādhi*). In fact the directions make the diversity of places possible. The parts of space are space and cannot be separated from it. Space is one; yet it is endowed with specialities (*vīṣeṣa*). Directions form the first *vīṣeṣas* and through them the diversity of places (*deśa*) too form the *vīṣeṣas* of space. So like all substantial realities, space too is characterized by

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8. Cf. Siauxe S. La Doctrine....p. 144 f.

9. AV. II. 3.14 f. "gaganam hi sākṣigocaram

10. AV. II. 2. 71 f. Cf. also ibid, 74

11. N. S. to A.V. I. 4.77 sākṣisiddham eva gaganam tad-bhāgā eva deśo na dravyāntaram iti tāsām api sākṣisiddhataiva....



the "relation of specified identity" (*saiviśeṣa-abheda*).<sup>12</sup> The eternal, unchangeable *ākāśa* is yet so constituted that it can receive within it all the concrete, extended objects. In Mādhvism space is a necessary condition for the existence of multiplicity. The *avyākṛta-ākāśa* is said to be uncreated, eternal and unchangeable. Still it is totally dependent on the Lord. Moreover, at the time of the production of the world, Viṣṇu puts all the objects into relation with space. The contact of things with space produces new specifications, viz., places or localisations in it. These specifications are acquired in dependence on Viṣṇu (*parādhīna viśeṣapati*) by space's link with the concrete objects.<sup>13</sup>

### Time (*kāla*)

Just as all the worlds and all the realities exist in space so they exist in time too. In the thought of Madhva both time and space are not mere 'a priori forms of our mind but real substantial realities. "All realities whether they be objects of perception or of memory are marked *khacita* by time"<sup>14</sup> Reasoning itself implies both memory and perception and hence it too is marked by time. All cognitions and all mental activities necessarily presuppose time. Everything is known as qualified by time.<sup>15</sup> So the Dvaitins are of the view that *Sākṣin* alone is capable of perceiving time. Jayatīrtha says that the object and the time in which the object exists are apprehended together.<sup>16</sup> *Sākṣin*

12. Siauve, S. La Doctrine.... p. 150

13. AV. II. 3.15. tathāpi mūrtasambandhaparatantraviśeṣayuk kham evotpattiman nāma Śrutīśabdavivakṣitaṃ.

Cf. Siauve, S. La Doctrine.... p. 151 f. & Sharma B. N. K. "Phil of M", p. 158.

14. AV. 1. 4.100 sākṣisiddhena kālena khacitaṃ hyeva vartate....

15. ibid. Comments in N. S. Jayatīrtha explains this point well.

16. Vādāvali. 469-1.

apprehends time and it through the instrumentality of the faculties of knowledge (senses) apprehend the object. But time in all its purity is known in deep sleep (*suṣupti*). When a person awakes after a deep sleep, he has the knowledge that he slept well. During deep sleep there are no mental activities. Neither memory nor any type of redictional inference can explain the knowledge of the fact that he slept well, for at the time of sleep there are no ordinary cognitional activities in him. To the Dvaitins, this is a clear indication that the *sākṣin* was intuiting time during deep sleep.<sup>17</sup>

Time is apprehended by the *Sākṣin* as a duration, a flow with no interruption.<sup>18</sup> Time is one (*eka*). Like space, time too is self contained (*svagata*).<sup>19</sup> The past, present and future form one time and they themselves are time. The past is limitless, the future is measureless. Only the *sākṣin* can perceive what is infinite. The past and the future meet in the present and this too is apprehended by the *sākṣin*. It is impossible to think of a prior or a posterior non-existence (*abhāva*) of time. Every part of time is time.

The past, present and future are the specifications (*vīṣeṣas*) of time. They do not in any way divide the continuous course of time. We first apprehend the one time and in this cognition we have also the knowledge of the different "specialities" of time (*vīṣeṣas*) which are supported by the one time. The instants are the ultimate *vīṣeṣas* of time. They are real and are time.

The very nature of time however, carries within it a problem. The past no more exists, the future is not yet in existence. The only existing reality in time is the ever peri-

17. AV. II. 2. 229. "atītānāgatau kālāvapi naḥ sākṣigocarau, tatsambandhitayā sattvam api dṛṣṭasya sākṣigam A. V. II. 4.99. kālo hi sākṣipratyakṣaḥ suṣuptau ca pratītiḥ....

Cf. also. Vādāvali. 458-9.

18. AV. II. 3.17

19. AV. II. 2.174

shing instant. So can we say that the divisions of time are introduced into it by convention or by external adjuncts? No, say the Dvaitins. The parts of time are natural and essential to it (*svābhāvika*). In fact the very nature of time manifests itself as eternal and non-eternal (*nityānitya*) imperishable and perishable.<sup>20</sup> The problem is : how can eternity and non-eternity be at once present in one and the same reality? Are they not mutually opposing characteristics?

At least Jayatīrtha tries to solve this problem by stating that Viṣṇu, the Lord making use of *prakṛti* as the material-supportive cause (*upādāna*) draws out the ever perishing instants from it. At the beginning of each *kalpa* the Lord produces out of *prakṛti* the perishable time. Instants which were not existing as such in *prakṛti* (*abhūta*) are now produced (*bhāvana*). So with the evolution of *prakṛti* there begins also the beginning of perishable time. *Prakṛti* itself and all its evolutes are supported by time. It is only the omnipotent Lord, who can introduce the perishable time into the eternal time. Thus the process of concrete becoming and the eternal flow of time are linked together by the almighty Viṣṇu.

Certainly, there are many problems regarding time that remain unsolved in our exposition.<sup>21</sup> But neither Madhva nor his commentators, among whom there are sharp differences of opinion have given us a clear solution to the problems which the very nature of time throws up. But the contribution of the Dvaitins to Indian thought seems to be the acceptance of the reality of becoming. Time in its perishable and non-eternal aspect is intimately related to the process of becoming since both this time and the becoming realities finally originate out of *prakṛti* under the efficient will of the Lord.

20. Tattva saṃkhyāna

21. Siauue. S. "La Doctrine .." 154 ff. A very good exposition of the Dvaita teaching on time can be found in these pages.

The time with which we are familiar is the time which affects our world and us men. The time in which the other worlds exist is essentially the same as ours, though its inner divisions of days, nights, years etc., are unimaginably longer than those in which we live. Time is thought of as a stream that flows not in a straight line but in never ending and ever-repeating cycles. Each cycle of our time is divided into four world periods, which are known as the *kṛta*, *treta*, *dvāpara* and *kali yugas*.<sup>22</sup> The first period is the golden age. During this period, right knowledge and the worship of Viṣṇu reigned in this world. In *kṛta-yuga* the 'cow of good conduct stood on all her four legs.' In duration too, it is the longest of all the four periods. Each succeeding world period is shorter in duration than the former and the state of right knowledge and good conduct in each succeeding period is worse than in the one before. The decline in knowledge and virtue is one of the characteristic marks of the flow of time.<sup>23</sup>

The above four world periods together (about 4.320.000 years) constitute a great world period (*mahāyuga*). A hundred such '*mahāyugas*' constitute a 'day of *Brahmā*'. At the end of a day of *Brahmā* there occurs a partial dissolution in which our world too is destroyed. This partial dissolution lasts one night of *Brahmā*, i. e., another 100 *mahāyugas*, at the end of which, once again, our world is recreated and the golden age begins anew. Total dissolution, i. e., the dissolution of all the worlds, happens once in 100 '*Brahmā-years*'. Then, after a period of rest, Viṣṇu begins again the work of 'creating' the world.

The perishable time in its smaller or larger divisions affects all beings except Viṣṇu, and to some extent Lakṣmī. Time carries in itself an element of decadence. As we remarked above, progress in time is not a progress in knowledge and virtue; on the contrary, the passage of time carries with

22. BSBh. I. 1. 1. & Bh. Gi. Bh. Introduction.

23. *ibid.*

it a slow falling away from the ways of good conduct, At the same time, *Kāla* (time) is inevitably tending back to its original golden era. We are now living in the fourth world period, which from the point of view of moral conduct is the worst of all the four.

### The World

The world of man is called '*bhū-loka*' (earth) and it forms part of a complex system of worlds. Below our world there are seven nether-worlds where the enemies of the gods (*asuras*) live. Below them there are hells of various kinds to which the wicked and the sinful go. Above our earth, there are seven upper-worlds, the highest of which is called *Vaikuṇṭha*, that is, the world of Viṣṇu. If we leave out of consideration the various hells, then our world may be said to lie in the middle of the world-system."<sup>24</sup>

All these worlds are evolutes of matter. Primary matter (*prakṛti* or *pradhāna*) is an eternal, non-conscious substance which is dependent on Viṣṇu,<sup>25</sup> Under the influence of Viṣṇu's action, it evolves into subtle and gross entities. Since matter is non-conscious in nature, it has no capacity to act with knowledge. It is not capable of free, pre-planned activity. During the time of dissolution; primary matter exists in its unevolved and inactive state. *Prakṛti* is the material cause of the three qualities (strands) known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.<sup>26</sup> These three qualities are in perfect harmony at the time of dissolution. Under the influence of Viṣṇu's action, this harmony is disturbed and thus the inner

24. For details Cf. Von Glasenapp. Op. Cit: p. 40

25. Tattvasaṃkhyāna.

Tat. Dī. p. 120

BSBh. II. 2. 1-2.

26. This is the view of the later mādhyama manuals like Mādhvasiddhāntasāra. How far Madhva himself taught this doctrine is not known to me. This doctrine, however, is peculiar to Madhvaism. In Śaṃkhya the three 'guṇas' are constitutive of prakṛiti.



evolution of matter begins. From primary matter, according to the preponderance of one or other of the qualities, all the various worlds and all the material things contained in them are produced. The human body, the gross body with all the other senses of knowledge and powers of action, and all objects of sense knowledge called '*mātras*', are evolutes of matter. The subtle body too with its fine organs including the mind (*manas*) is an evolute of matter,<sup>27</sup> Our earth is called 'earth' because the element 'earth', which is also an evolute of matter, is predominant in its constitution. The other worlds are constituted by other elements.

As already noted above, Viṣṇu is the indwelling principle, ruler, supporter and principal force of action in all these worlds and in all the material things contained in them. The worlds, the elements, the senses, the sense objects, etc., are also presided over by gods, who are subordinate to Viṣṇu. The soul in its human situation is an inhabitant of the earth. But man can, once his gross body is destroyed, go to an upper or lower world according to the '*kārmic*' situation in which he he finds himself.

## II

### The Nature of Man

As already stated, man is a composite being, composed of a finite spiritual substance and matter. Before we take up the study of the composite being, we must look into and examine the nature of its component parts. Let us begin our study, then, with the examination of the nature of the soul.

#### 1. The Nature of the Soul (jīva)

In his *Tattvasaṃkhyāna*, Madhva, while enumerating the various categories of beings, says that the soul is a dependent, positive, eternal, conscious substance.<sup>28</sup> In other writings

27. Narain. K. Op. Cit. p. 80 ff.

28. *Tattvasaṃkhyāna*

Madhva describes the soul (puruṣa or ātman) as a spiritual and active reality. In the Sāṃkhya system, 'puruṣa' (soul) is inactive.<sup>29</sup> For Śaṅkara, there is only one conscious being, namely, Brahman, which is the absolute and the only reality in this universe and which is identical with man's true self.<sup>30</sup> For Madhva, there is one infinite, conscious being, Viṣṇu, and dependent on Viṣṇu, there are numberless finite spiritual beings or souls.<sup>31</sup> In the Rāmānuja system, the souls form the body of Viṣṇu. The God-soul relationship is expressed in terms of the soul-body relationship.<sup>32</sup> In Mādhvism, God and soul are completely distinct from each other.

The best way to understand the nature of the soul in Mādhvism is to examine its relationship to Viṣṇu. Madhva tries to express the nature of the soul through the metaphor of reflection. The soul, says Madhva, is a reflection of Viṣṇu. The relation between Viṣṇu and the soul is the relation of the reflected object to its reflection (bimbapratibimbabhāva).

In his B. S. Bh.,<sup>33</sup> Madhva quotes the *paingīśruti* which states that reflections are of two kinds : reflection through a medium or conditioned reflection (sopādhi reflection) : and reflection which does not need a medium or unconditioned reflection (anupādhi reflection). Reflection which calls for a medium may be illustrated by the example of the reflection of our face on the surface of a mirror. Mediumless reflection

29. E. Frauwallner Vol. I. p. 350

30. Chapt. I.

31. Tattvasaṃkhyāna

VTV. no, 387 'in the space that a single atom occupies, an infinite number of groups of Jīvas exist because of their subtlety....anantāḥ prānirāśayaḥ.

32. Śrī-Bhāṣya II. 3.42

Also Bh. Kumarappa Op. Cit. p. 278 ff.

Lacombe, O. Op, Cit. p. 285 ff.

33. BSBh. II. 3.50 sopādhir anupādhis cā pratibimbo dvidheyate

jīvaḥ parāśyanupādhir indracāpo yathā raver iti

according to Madhva is exemplified in the phenomenon of the rainbow, which is the mediumless reflection of the sun. A conditioned reflection is destroyed when the medium is destroyed, or when the contact between the reflected object and the medium is removed.<sup>34</sup> The souls, which, according to the teaching of the sacred tradition, are eternal and indestructible, cannot be such reflections of Viṣṇu. So they are mediumless reflection. But do not even mediumless reflections such as the rainbow disappear? Madhva does not seem to have entered into the question. But his use of the metaphor shows us at least, that the soul, though a reflection of Viṣṇu, is yet not a reflection like other reflections.

Perhaps, Jayatīrtha can throw some light on this difficult problem. He writes that the medium of a reflection can either be the very essential nature of the reflection (Svarūpa) or a medium which is extrinsic to the essential nature of the reflected image. But the soul, which is the reflection of Viṣṇu, has its own essential nature as its medium. The subtle and gross bodies which the souls possess in their transmigratory existence form the extrinsic medium, which confers on the *jīva* a 'sort of transmigratory individuation'. But the soul or the finite, conscious being in its complete purity and separation from all that is material has no other medium than its own essential nature.<sup>35</sup>

What do Madhva and Jayatīrtha intend to teach by saying that the essential nature of the soul is its own medium?

34. Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 18

Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 18

Madhva has the same ideas in Bhāg. Tat. jivopādhir dvidhā proktaḥ svarūpaṁ bāhyam eva ca bāhyopādhir layaṁ yāti muktāv anyasya tu sthitiḥ This 'bāhyopādhi' which on release is destroyed is the body

35. Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 18 says that being can be its own 'medium' of reflection is not observed usually. The soul is a special case.

Perhaps we can understand Madhva a little better, if we recall what we have said in chapter one on the nature of Viśeṣas. The svarūpopādhi theory of Madhva seems to be an application of his viśeṣa theory. That the soul's essential nature is its own medium, is the essential speciality (viśeṣa) of the soul. The souls, in the measure they are conscious and blissful beings, are distinguished from matter. But the conscious being and Viṣṇu are alike in that they are conscious and blissful. What is it, then, that distinguishes God from the soul? Can we say that Viṣṇu is independent and the soul dependent? But matter is also dependent on Viṣṇu. The soul is dependent on Viṣṇu in a different manner from matter. The essential, distinguishing attribute of the soul is that it is the reflection of Viṣṇu, a reflection of Viṣṇu in such a way that the reflection and the medium coincide, Madhva, and especially Jayatīrtha, think that the *saarūpopādhitva* of the soul can at one stroke explain the soul's essential dependence on and distinction from Viṣṇu, and its similarity to him.

The soul is the reflection, not of a material thing but of God himself. God being omnipresent, his contact with the medium of reflection cannot be removed or destroyed.<sup>36</sup> The medium on which Viṣṇu reflects himself is the essential nature of the soul, because the soul is essentially spiritual. Jayatīrtha writes : 'How can something be at once the medium and the reflection? Such a thing does not fall within the sphere of experience. The answer is that in spiritual beings this (viz. that they are both medium and reflection) is possible precisely because they are conscious (cidrūpa), and because they are eternal.'<sup>37</sup>

36. Pr. Di. on Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 18

nāyam ātmā ghaṭādeḥ kasyacitpratibimbaḥ kīntv  
īśvarasya, sa cāprameyaḥ  
sarvagata iti katham tasyopādhisannidhināśa iti....

37. ibid.

Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 18 svayam evātra pradarsakaḥ cittat-  
vāt, nityaś copādhiḥ

But then we may ask, is not the very conscious nature of the soul a reflection of Viṣṇu ?

In his Kath. Up. Bh.<sup>38</sup> Madhva brings forward an example which throws light on the problem. The outer eye is a reflection of the inner eye, that is, the Sun-god; in the same way the soul is the reflection of the Absolute Being, i. e. of the 'conscious, spiritual nature of Viṣṇu'. This means that the conscious character of the soul is not independent of Viṣṇu.

What does Madhva teach by telling us that the soul is the reflection of Viṣṇu ? He wants to bring to our attention three truths concerning the nature of the soul : (1) the finite spiritual being is similar to Viṣṇu; (2) it is completely distinct from Viṣṇu; (3) and it is radically dependent on Viṣṇu.

The soul is similar (a little similar *alpasāmya*) to Viṣṇu. The soul 'like Viṣṇu' is being, consciousness and bliss; it is indestructible and eternal, because it is the reflection of Viṣṇu. The soul is completely distinct from Viṣṇu, just as the reflection is completely distinct from the object reflected. Finally, the soul is utterly dependent on Viṣṇu just as the rainbow is utterly dependent on the sun.

The Advaitins before Madhva had made use of the 'reflection theory' in order to prove their illusionistic monism. Śaṅkara, for example, in his commentary on BS II. 3.50 'ābhāsa eva ca' (it is just an appearance), says that the soul is only a 'reflection' (*pratibimba*) of Brahman. The soul is neither the same as Brahman nor is it different from it. In truth, all reflections are non-different from the reflected object, though they appear different (distinct, divided) owing to the medium of reflection.<sup>39</sup>

38. Kath. Up. Bh. p. 18 *cetanābhāsako jīvaḥ paramaś cetano Hariḥ*

39. ŚBS Bh. II. 3.50 *ābhāsa eva caiṣa jīvaḥ parasyātmano jalasūryakādivat pratipattavyaḥ na sa eva sākṣāt-nāpi vastvantaram*



After Śaṅkara, Suresvara, Padmapāda and Prakāśātman among others have utilised the same 'pratibimbavāda' to prove that the individual self, which is the reflection or Brahman, is but an illusion. Once the medium of reflection, namely nescience, is destroyed by true knowledge the illusory experience of an individual self as distinct from Brahman will also disappear.<sup>40</sup>

It is against this Advaitic background that we have to look at the mādḥva views on the nature of reflections (pratibimbas). Madhva, by insisting on the reflection theory wanted to show that it by itself did not involve illusionism. Madhva's effort to distinguish between different types of reflections and medium must be looked at from the point of view of his anti-advaitic intention.

Madhva tries to express the three truths concerning the nature of the soul by means of other metaphors and examples. In the section on the Manifestations of Viṣṇu, we have already said that the soul may be called a 'distinct part' of Viṣṇu (vibhinnāṃśa).<sup>41</sup> Madhva would admit that it is legitimate to speak of the soul as the body of Viṣṇu, provided we understand by it that the soul is completely under the sway of Viṣṇu (tadvaśa), just as the body is under the control of the

40. Suresvara's views. P. Hacker, Die Schüler Śaṅkaras, p. 70 f.  
On Padmapāda, *ibid.* p. 237 ff.

"Das Verhältnis der individuellen Seele zum Brahman ist vergleichbar dem Verhältnis eines sich spiegelnden Objektes (bimba) zu seinem Abbild in einem Spiegel. Dabei ist die Seele kein von Brahman verschiedenes Wesen, sondern mit ihm identisch, (tad eva)."

On Prakāśātman *conf.* Cammann *Op. Cit.* p. 93 ff.  
"Das Brahman und das individuelle Selbst oder die Einselsee verhalten sich wie ein Ding, das gespiegelt wird, und sein Spiegelbild. Sie sind identisch." (*ibid.* p. 93)

41. BSBh. II. 3.43. 47

Tat. Dī. p. 269 ato jīvasyāṃśatvaṃ nāma kiñcit  
sādrśyamātrayuktatvaṃ

soul.<sup>42</sup> Madhva is ready to go further and even admit that the soul may be called Brahman in order to emphasize the similarity that exists between the finite and infinite spiritual beings. In fact the Bhaviṣyat Purāṇa called the soul 'Brahman'.<sup>43</sup> Madhva thinks that the Viṣṇu-soul relationship could be expressed by the images of the father-son and king-subject relationships.<sup>44</sup> Each of these expressions bring out one or other aspect of the Viṣṇu-soul relation.

## 2. The complete Distinction between Viṣṇu and the Souls.

While we explained Madhva's conception of the nature of the soul, we briefly touched upon this aspect of his thought. But it may be good to examine this point of his teaching a little more closely because in the Monist-Dualist controversies it occupied a very important place.

In a preceding section we explained at length, Madhva's view on the reality of the world.<sup>45</sup> According to Madhva this universe (hence the souls also) is real. This means that the universe has a reality distinct from the reality of Viṣṇu. The reality of the universe is dependent on Viṣṇu, but it is not the reality of Viṣṇu. Here we wish to consider only one small point, namely, the reality of the soul, which, though similar to the reality of Brahman, is yet completely distinct from Him.

42. BSBh. I. 41; II. 3.26

43. BSBh. II. 3.29 bhinnā j.vāḥ paro bhinnas tathā'pi jñānarūpataḥ procyante brahmarūpeṇa....  
Sarvaṃ khalv idaṃ brahma (Ch. Up. III, 14) is applied to the souls.

44. BSBh. II. 3.43 mām rakṣatu vibhur nityaṃ putro'haṃ parāmatmanah  
Tat. D., p. 265 pitṛputratvādi nānāprakārasambandhavyapadeśaḥ

45. Cf. Chap. III.

Madhva naturally, rejects the advaitic idea of Brahman-soul identity as sheer blasphemy. In his short treatise, *Upādhikhaṇḍana*, Madhva rejects the monist position that our experience of the soul as a distinct reality has its origin in the medium or condition (*upādhi*), called nescience.<sup>46</sup> How can the self-luminous Brahman be surrounded by ignorance? How can it ever reflect itself on the medium of nescience? How can the Infinite appear as finite, the self-luminous as ignorant? It is not right to argue that Brahman could appear as finite, because of the presence of a limiting adjunct.<sup>47</sup> Madhva asks the Monist: is this limiting medium real or unreal? If it is real then Monism is no more true, and "Dvaita" stands vindicated. If unreal, then the appearance and the limiting function of this unreal medium call for another medium. This will either lead us to the truth of 'Dvaita' or to infinite regress.<sup>48</sup> In whichever direction the Monist turns, he is caught in a blind alley. His theory cannot be validly proved. If we take the examples brought forward by the Monists to prove their theory we find that in all of them, the medium, e.g. the mirror, the prism etc., are real. Have we anywhere an illusory medium which can bring about an illusory reflection?<sup>49</sup>

The fundamental defect in the argument of the Monists and the *Bhedābheda*vādins is their tacit presupposition that a medium or condition can cause distinction where there is

46. *Upadhikhandana* ajñatākhilasamvettuḥ ghaṭate na kutaścana

47. *ibid.* upādhibhedād ghaṭate iti cet

48. *ibid.* Sa svabhāvataḥ ajñānato vā; dvaitasyasatyatā svata eva cet.

anavasthitir ajñānahetau....

Madhva points out that defects like 'anyonyāśraya' are also to be found in the monist's arguments.

49. *VTV*. 366 Na ca mithyopādhikṛto bhedah kvāpi dr̥ṣṭaḥ

*ibid.* 377 The very concept of an unreal adjunct is untenable because it is of the nature of imagining the self as non-self.

none. The Monists think that the all-pervading and partless space appears to us as divided when it is conditioned by things like pots etc. Madhva says that space has in and of itself parts, though they are not visible to us. But, the adjuncts like pot and hut make the existing parts perceptible to us.<sup>50</sup> If external conditions or adjuncts alone should be the reason for our experience of difference, then Caitira's experience of pain and Maitra's experience of pleasure should coincide, because the experiencing and perceiving agent, the spirit; is the same in both persons. The distinction between Caitira and Maitra ultimately depends not upon external bodies but upon the two distinct and separate conscious principles.<sup>51</sup>

The Brahman-Soul identity theory according to Madhva does away with the validity of the first Sūtra of the Brahma Sūtras. All, including the Monists, admit that we should inquire into the nature of Brahman. But an inquiry into Brahman implies the real existence of the person who inquires, the reality of the object inquired into, of the reality of the purpose (*prayojana*) and of the fruit (*phala*) of the inquiry. By *phala* Madhva means liberation, which is the fruit of the inquiry. By *prayojana* Madhva implies that the inquirer's effort is purposeful and effective, because of the 'favour' of Viṣṇu.<sup>52</sup> The Advaitins not only deny the reality of the person who seeks liberation, but also the reality of liberation and of divine grace. They say that Brahman alone is real. Thus they invalidate the whole content of the first sūtra; and in doing so, they destroy the very 'science of liberation' (*śāstra*) which they want to uphold.

The Monist's 'Brahman-Soul identity theory' can be refuted from another angle. Let us try to formulate Madhva's

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50. Uaādhikhaṇḍana vidyamānasya bhedasya jñāpakonaiva kārakaḥ

51. Upādhikhaṇḍana-

52. BSBh. I. 1. 1. ataḥ śabda hetvarthaḥ

S. Siauue, Op. Cit. p. 33

argument in a western syllogism. Whenever we have realities with opposing attributes, they, must be really distinct. But Brahman and the soul have opposing attributes. Therefore, they are really distinct.

The major needs no explanation. The minor however, needs to be explained, and we shall explain it using the texts of Madhva himself. Madhva clearly assigns opposing attributes to Brahman and the Soul.

<b>Brahman (Viṣṇu)</b>	<b>Soul (jīva)</b>
Omniscient (sarvajñā)	Has little knowledge (alpajñā)
Omnipotent (sarvaśakta)	Has only very little power (alpaśakta)
Independent (svatantra)	Non-independent (asavatantra)
Is the indwelling principle (antaryāmin)	Is the one in whom Viṣṇu dwells
Is the one with ever realised desires (satyakāma; āptakāma)	Is the one whose desires are not fully realised (kāmyakā- ma)

Enjoys only what is pleasant; Experiences pleasure and pain.<sup>53</sup> There is no need to expose further the differences between Viṣṇu and jīva. From what has already been said it is quite clear that Viṣṇu and the soul cannot possibly be identical.

The sacred texts too, Madhva thinks, proclaim with one voice the difference between Viṣṇu and the souls. The so called identity texts such as 'aham Brahmāsmi, or 'tat tvam asi' do not teach monism. Let us take for example the text 'tat tvam asi' which is repeated nine times in the 6th chapter of Cha. Up. Madhva asks his opponent to read the text and

53. Kaṭh. Up. Bh. pp. 14, 15, 17; AV. I. 1. 96, 97, 100, 101.

BSBH. I. 2. 8, 11 etc. VTV. no. 275

ātmā (Viṣṇu) hi paramasvatantraḥ sarvavit sarvaśa-  
kīṭh paramasukhaḥ, jīvas tu tadvaśaḥ, alpajñāḥ,  
alpaśaktiḥ....



interpret it according to the rules of interpretation. If he were to do so he would realise that it means not 'tat tvam asi' but 'atat tvam asi' (thou art not that). In fact, the father of Śvetaketu is telling his son that the individual is not identical with Brahman. The Advaitin is misreading the text when he reads it as 'tat tvam asi'. All the examples given by the father teach in fact the reality of this distinction.<sup>54</sup>

Such texts as 'I am Brahman' must be interpreted in relation to the inner ruler : the inner ruler of the soul is Brahman.<sup>55</sup>

Madhva rejects too the so-called 'ekajīvavāda' of the Advaitins, which states that there is only one soul in the world. All the other souls are considered to be the imaginary or dream products of this one jīva.<sup>56</sup>

54. VTV. no. 224 Just as the bird and the rope are different, the juices of the many trees are different, the rivers and the sea are different, the thief and the property stolen are different, the man and the Gāndhāra country are different, so the soul and God are different....

ibid. no. 210 sa eṣo'ṇimaitadātmya idaṃ sarvaṃ tat satyam

sa ātmātat tvam asi Śvetaketo

Cf. also ibid. nos. 181-188

55. VTV. no. 266 aham brahmāsmi....so' sau yo 'sau so' ham....antaryāmy apekṣayā

56. VTV. nos. 309 ff. At the end of this section, we may describe the jīva following the lead of Jayatīrtha thus : The self is of the nature of "I" and is cognised by the internal witness. It is different from the body etc; it is endowed with a form, and the power of activity and enjoyment. (Text in B. N. K. Sharma Op. Cit. p. 177)

The soul is 'svaprakāśa' (self-luminous).

The 'self-luminosity of the soul has a 'content', viz. "I" (aham).

The nature of the soul is strength, bliss splendour and pure knowledge. (BSBH. II. 31)

### 3. The Body of Man

In fact we should speak rather of the bodies of man. Every soul caught up in the human situation has a gross body and a subtle body. The gross body is the external, sensible body which is born and which grows and dies. It is composed principally of earth, though the other elements which are products of matter are also to be found in it. This body has the external sense organs and the faculties of action. At each birth the soul becomes the possessor of a new gross body which accords perfectly with the state of its past karma.<sup>57</sup>

The second body is called the subtle body because it is the product of subtle matter. The subtle body has the inner, subtle faculties of knowledge and action. The five life-breaths and mind (*manas*), which gives the first unity to all human actions form part of this body. This body, unlike the gross body, is united to the soul from eternity and will remain united to it till liberation is attained. It wanders with the soul in the course of its transmigratory existence.<sup>58</sup>

Both these bodies are evolutes of matter and in themselves non-conscious, non-knowing substances. As matter is always subordinate to the spirit, so are both these bodies subordinate to the soul. The connection between the soul and matter is beginningless.<sup>59</sup>

There is in fact a third material entity which is connected with the soul from beginningless time till the time of release :

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57. BSBh. II. 4.22,23 Earthly bodies consist of earth by half...  
 ibid. III. 1.25 On karma and the nature of birth.
58. Kath. Up. Bh. p. 12 On the nature, function and meaning of the human body the Mādhvas have very little to tell us. What is given here, is taken from the scattered remarks in the works of Madhva.
59. BSBh. II. 4. 22, 23 The beginningless connection of soul and matter is but a part of Madhva's theory of bondage and karma.

positive ignorance. This positive ignorance is a part of the 'tamoguna' of matter, and it enchains the soul to the state of bondage. Like soul and matter, positive ignorance too is ultimately under the control of Viṣṇu and it is he who causes it to arise end to enchain the soul to the bodies.<sup>60</sup>

So the situation of man as man arises when a finite spiritual soul, gross body and fine body join together to form a single unit and when this whole composite is 'covered over' by ignorance.

#### 4. The Reason for the Union of Soul and Matter

The soul which is in itself knowledge, being and bliss gets itself united to matter because of its past karma. But this is only an immediate explanation. In order to avoid further difficulties, Madhva, like the other Indian thinkers, says that this union is beginningless.<sup>61</sup> This assertion is intended to do away with the question of an absolute beginning. It also avoids the problem of how the soul, given its nature, could ever get entangled with matter. Ultimately Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu alone (in the system of Madhva) is the reason for the body-soul union. Bondage, Karma and above all the souls are dependent on Viṣṇu. It is his 'divine play' or better the abundance of his bliss which in the last analysis accounts for the human situation.<sup>62</sup> So the jīva, though in itself a

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Madhva admits that a body may have more than one soul. When a soul through rain enters into rice, etc. it enters into the 'body' of rice which has already an 'abhimānījīva; though the new soul is not a partaker of the experiences of the body into which it has entered. (BSBh. III. 1. 25, 26)

60. Cf. Chapter VI. Part. I.

61. BSBh. II. 3. 29 says that the soul-anādinā puṇyena pāpena cānubaddhaḥ

62. The absolute independence of Viṣṇu is the ultimate reason for this assertion. Bondage in its totality is caused by Viṣṇu. Yet the reason for the union of soul and body is in one sense "the good of the souls". Viṣṇu wants to save the good souls.

reflection of the Supreme, must, by a sort of divine necessity, find by and for itself and under the guidance of Viṣṇu's favour the fullness of its nature, in and through its union with matter.

From the beginningless character of the body soul union it follows that all souls (Lakṣmī of course, excepted) are in beginningless possession of karmic bodies. It is not possible for a soul to enter into a first bodily existence, for such an 'event' would not find a sufficient explanation either in Viṣṇu or in the nature of the soul or of matter. If we look at this problem from within the circle of transmigration, we must say that *karma* is the explanation of 'man's existence'; if we look at it from outside the circle, then Viṣṇu becomes the cause of "human existence." If we go a step further and ask why Viṣṇu should place the souls in transmigratory existence, then we have both a secondary and a primary reason. *Karma* and the nature of jiva are only the "secondary causes whereas Viṣṇu is the primary cause of our human situation.

Though Madhva does not explicitly state that Viṣṇu has placed souls fit for liberation in the human condition for the sake of their liberation, still from some of the remarks on the purpose of 'Śṛṣṭi' it seems to be legitimate to accept that that the union of spirit and matter is ultimately for the good of the finite spirit.<sup>63</sup>

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63. AV. II. 1. 109 asserts that the sacred texts are meant for the liberation (of souls). The Sacred texts come from Viṣṇu's grace. Though Madhva asserts that Viṣṇu could not have any personal end in creating the world (AV. II. 1. 104) and though Jayatīrtha affirms that altruistic objectives are difficult to be ascertained (NS. to I. 1. 69) still we know that both Madhva and Jayatīrtha held the view that the Lord gave the sacred texts for the good of others. So in the Lord there is eternally the will to save the souls. At the root of creation too (at least for the muktiyogya souls) this altruistic will of the Lord is at work.

### 5. Birth and Death of Man.

We have till now analysed the entities which come together to form a human being. Let us now try to study the composite being, man.

Man comes into being at birth and so we must begin our study by trying to see what Madhva understands by the term 'birth'.

In one sense we cannot speak of the birth of man. The soul is eternal and the original stuff of the body, namely matter, is also eternal. Both these are without birth or death. So neither the body nor the soul can 'simply' be said to be born. The union of the soul with the subtle body, being beginningless, falls outside the reach of our inquiry. Again the union of the soul with the gross body is also beginningless, so that here too we cannot speak of a first union of the soul with a first gross body. What we can study though, is the perceptible birth, or the union of body and soul which takes place at a particular time. This union of the soul with a particular gross body is called 'birth' in ordinary parlance. This is the reason why Madhva says that the soul's birth is nothing but 'dehasambandha', or 'dehasamyoga' (relation or union with the body.)<sup>64</sup> Here the word 'deha' definitely stands for the gross body. In another place Madhva says that the birth of the soul should be understood as its embodied state.<sup>65</sup> This birth is directed by Viṣṇu, who is seated in the soul. The soul enters into the womb with Viṣṇu and is born with Viṣṇu. The nature and condition of the body into

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64, Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 26 dehasamyogātmakajaniḥ  
ibid. II. 29 dehayogaḥ

Kāth. Up. Bh. p. 14 Birth is the coming into being of a body,

ibid. p. 16 Birth is the entering of a soul into a maternal womb.

65. VTV. no. 453 The birth of Viṣṇu is his 'prādur-bhāva'; but 'dehotpattis tad anyeṣām' also BSBh. III. 1.15 f.



which the soul enters depends on the state of its past *karma*. The soul is thought to enter into food, and through food it enters into the body of the father and from the father into the mother, and in the mother's womb it enters into a new body. This is the normal birth of a soul.<sup>66</sup> According to Jayatirtha there are other supernanormal births which are reserved for exceptional souls.<sup>67</sup>

Madhva distinguishes between two types of deaths : the empirical, common death, which is the separation of the soul-subtle body composite from the gross body; and the second death, which is the separation of the soul from the subtle body and which takes place at liberation.<sup>68</sup> The first death is compared to the putting away of one's old clothes. As birth is an entrance into a gross body, so death is departure from the body. The soul is said to depart from the body through the heart or through the arteries of the head.<sup>69</sup> Commenting on B. S. 1.3.9 Madhva says that death follows upon the departure of Viṣṇu from the body. The first death is always followed by birth. The second death which is not followed by birth is the final and definitive separation of the soul from matter and bondage in general.<sup>70</sup>

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66. The whole process of the soul's wandering down from 'svarga' etc. is described in BSBh. III. 1.25-29.

67. Tat. pr. on BSBh. III. 1.29

'asādhāraṇaṁ viśiṣṭaṁ uttamānāṁ eva labhyaṁ'

But how this special birth takes place is not explained.

68. BSBh. IV. 2.17

Kaṭh Up. Bh. p. 14 Death is the decaying of the body. ibid. p. 13 Sthūladehaparitṛyāga is said to be death. In the same text Madhva clearly distinguishes between the soul's separation from the gross body and from the subtle-body.

69. BSBh. IV. 2.17

70. Kaṭh Up Bh. p. 13 dehād viśeṣeṇa mocanaṁ nāma muktir eva.

**Man, the Composite Being.**

The soul is of such a nature that it can exist in itself without any relation to a body, though before liberation it is somehow beginninglessly connected with matter. But this connection affects neither the intrinsic nature nor the existence of the soul. Philosophically the soul by itself is a complete substance. The two bodies, as evolutes of matter, are completely and essentially different from the soul. From the point of view of existence, the bodies seem indeed to be independent of the soul. But the very formation and nature of the gross body depend upon the load of past *karma* carried by the subtle body, and hence the soul has a part to play in the formation of the body. After death, the body dissolves into the elements from which it arose. As for the nature and existence of the subtle body nothing much can be said about it, because Madhva hardly discusses the problem in his writings. For Madhva, and perhaps for all the Hindu thinkers, the subtle body is some sort of a link between the spiritual soul and the gross body. It, chiefly the mind is at the same time the carrier of the past *karma*.

The soul is atomic in size and it dwells in the heart.<sup>71</sup> The view that the soul is of atomic size goes against the Jaina doctrine, which says that the soul has the size of the body in which it dwells at any particular time. If the Jaina view were correct, asks Madhva, how could the soul of an elephant pass into the body of an ant?<sup>72</sup> It cannot be said that the soul changes its size when it passes from one body into another, because if we admit the possibility of such a change then we

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71. BSBh. II. 3.19, 24

72. *ibid.* II. 2.34

Tat. Dī. p. 217 f.

The Mādhvas conceive the soul as an atomic, invisible substance. It is conceived on the pattern of material substances.

would make the soul perishable.<sup>73</sup> At the same time we cannot hold the view that the soul is devoid of size, because what is devoid of size has no existence. That which has no size has no essence (svarūpa) and what has no essence has no reality.<sup>74</sup>

From the heart, where the soul is located, it pervades the whole body, just as sandal paste spread over one part of the body, extends its refreshing fragrance all over.<sup>75</sup> This way of conceiving the presence and pervasion of the human souls in the body is not without difficulties. The sandal paste is 'well' present in one part of the body, but is not so 'well' present in the other parts. Madhva accepts the validity of this objection and tries to explain the presence of the soul in the body by means of another example. A light in a room is said to pervade the whole room as far as the luminosity of the light (prakāśa) is concerned. But the light as a burning object (jyotirūpeṇa) is present only in one spot of the room. In an analogous manner the soul, in as much as it is of the nature of consciousness, is present in every part of the body; but the soul as an atomic entity is present only in the heart. But since the soul is of the nature of spiritual consciousness we simply say that the soul is pervading the whole body.<sup>76</sup> The soul can thus perform this function because it

73. BSBh. II. 2.35 vikāritvād antyavaprasaktaḥ  
Tat. Dī. p. 218 Because of change, the soul will be non-eternal, and if the soul should be non-eternal it cannot be fit for liberation, and without liberation, the whole 'śāstra would be purposeless.

74. BSBh. II. 2.36

75. ibid. II. 3.24 aṇor api jīvasya sarvaśarīravvyāptir  
Yujyate....

Tat. Dī. p. 248 haricandanabinduvat....

The soul is in the heart....BSBh. II, 3.25; Cf. also pr. Up. III. 6.

76. BSBh. II. 3.26 yathā 'lokasya prakāśaguṇena vyāptir,  
jyotirūpeṇāvyāptiḥ

As regards the soul : cidguṇena vyāptir, jīvarūpeṇāvyāptiḥ

is a spiritual being. A spiritual being always presides over material being. The material being in its turn puts limits to the universality of the spirit.

The soul is not the body. Spirit transcends matter. Yet the body is known as 'mine' "dehād anyo" nubhavata ātmā bhāti śarīrīṇāṃ mama deha iti vyaktaṃ mamārtha itivat" (A. V. II, 2, 43) We never say I am body but have a body. "dehātmatvaṃ yadi na tat prāptaṃ pratyakṣataḥ kvacit, mama deha iti hyeva na deho 'ham iti pramā'" (Ibid III, 2 65) The difference between body and soul is discussed quite at length by Madhva in A. V. III, 2, 67-72.

The other person has a spirit or soul is known by the signs given by him. As Madhva says" ceṣṭāliṅgena sātmatve paradehasya sādhitē, anyatvaṃ svātmanas tasmāt śarvair evanubhūyate" (Up. Kh) The relationship between the soul or ātman and other realities is one of viṣay-viṣayībhāva. (Cf. Gī. Bh II. 14)

From the metaphysical and epistemological points of view, we can draw some very important conclusions from the doctrine of the presence of the soul in the body. The soul by its presence and pervasion confers on the 'composite' a certain active, let us say vital and cognitive unity. Though theoretically, we should speak of the soul and body as two complete substances, still in the practical order, because of the power of the soul and its penetration of the two bodies, they form together one unit of knowledge and action. Though this unity is less than the ontological unity of existence, still it is much more than the accidental unity of two complete beings.

Under the influence of the radiation of the soul then (the attribute of knowledge) the two bodies together constitute 'de facto' the psychophysical complex, which is the privileged

Tat. Dī. p. 242

Ma Up. Bh. III. 6.9 aṇūnām api jīvanām prakāśo-  
vyāpako bhavet.

instrument of enjoyment and suffering. This psycho-physical complex, is necessary for the soul to pass from its present potential state of knowledge to actual knowledge. As we have seen above, the soul can at present know only when an object is presented to it. This happens only through the senses.

The whole man is thus the agent of the prescribed duties. Without the body the soul cannot perform the enjoined activities, at present.

Another point which should be noted here in Madhva's anthropology is the relation between and the continuity of the psychic and the somatic on the one hand; and the radical separation of matter from the spirit on the other. That part of man which has to do with emotions, pain, feelings of all sorts, is more related to matter than to the spirit, though the matter here in question, viz., the body, is matter pervaded and penetrated by the 'conscious stuff' of the soul. The state of luminosity, bliss, etc. pertains to the spirit as spirit though, the spirit is conditioned by matter as long as it is not emancipated.

### III

#### 6. Viṣṇu and the Activity of Man.

##### 1. Man as Agent

Madhva accepts the fourfold end of man taught by the Hindu tradition. Man must in his life seek to attain righteousness through good conduct (dharma), he must try to get for himself a part of the goods of this earth (artha), he must seek love and happiness in family life (kāma) and above all he must ceaselessly direct his whole life to the attainment of the most important objective of human existence, liberation (mokṣha)<sup>77</sup> Madhva, being a teacher

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77. VTV. no. 102 mokṣo hi sarvapuruṣārthottamaḥ  
Cf. also Chapter VI. Part II.



of the way to liberation, concentrates all his attention on this point. Man must try to get out of the cycle of birth and death; he must try to achieve freedom from bondage. All the other ends of man are means to this final goal.

Since in the system of Madhva, both bondage and liberation are real, it necessarily follows that man, or as Madhva says, the soul, must be active. Liberation is something which is to be attained. Madhva deals with the agentship of the soul, not of man, in his B.S.Bh. II. 3. 33 ff.<sup>78</sup> The Monists say that the soul is inactive or that the activity of the soul is a false superimposition.<sup>79</sup> This view is rejected by Madhva, because it will make the 'science of liberation' (śāstra) purposeless. The injunctions and prohibitions contained in the sacred texts will become meaningless. God himself will be touched by good and evil and thus divinity will be jeopardised. So the soul is a true agent.<sup>80</sup> It is an agent because it can make use of means for the attainment of an end and we see from experience that souls attain results through their actions. When the Br. Ā. Up. III. 4. 15 imposes upon man the duty of meditation, it means to say that the soul can engage in the 'work' of meditation.<sup>81</sup>

78. BSBh, II. 3.33. ff,

79. SBSBh. II. 3.40 na svābhāvikaṃ kartṛtam ātmanḥ-sambhavati.

The condition of being an agent, experiencer etc. is brought about by nescience.

For the Sāṅkhya-Yogins too 'puruṣa' is inactive.

80. BSBh. II. 3.33 jīvasya kartṛtvābhāve śāstrasyāprayojakatvapṛāpteḥ

Tat. Dī. p. 261 svargādīphalārthaṃ pravartamānaṃ śāstram anarthakaṃ syāt.

81. ibid. II. 3.35. Not only does the śāstra tell us that the soul is an agent, but experience too testifies to this truth. In the action of cutting etc, man takes and makes use of such instruments as axe.

## 2. Man's activity and God's absolute sovereignty.

Madhva admits that man is a real agent. Not only man, but every finite spiritual substance is an agent, a real agent. But is he a free agent? Has man the capacity to act or not to act, to act in one way or another? Ultimately, is man spontaneous enough to take upon himself the ultimate responsibility of his own actions (moral responsibility), because these actions imply a decision, an engagement of what is deepest in man?

Before we examine whether Madhva has any answer to this all important human problem, it must be noted that he has not posited the problem of man's freedom as we have formulated it here. The reasons for it will be explained later. Moreover, a just appraisal of Madhva's views on our present topic is possible only if we take into account his teaching on the nature of *karma* and the sovereignty Viṣṇu exercises over everything.

Madhva accepts the *karma* theory as a part of his system. In the present context, this theory means that the residual merits and demerits of the past lives have a determining influence on man's present situation. The influence of the past *karma* on one's present actions may be unconscious, yet it is real. Though we will have to discuss this aspect of the *karma* theory again in connection with the problem of difference, inequality and evil in the world, we may say in anticipation, that Madhva seems to admit, that there is always antecedent *karma* that is the cause of every one of the subsequent actions which the Lord makes the souls perform. Madhva quotes the Bhāg. Purāṇa to prove this point. 'Viṣṇu impels the soul into such a course

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(Tat. Di. p. 262); Jayatīrtha says that 'matter' acts when it is induced to action by another being. The soul acts by its own will (*svecchayā*) without any adventitious cause. Matter and souls are agents in different ways.

of action as the necessary consequence of some previous action of the soul'.<sup>82</sup>

The doctrine of karma makes Viṣṇu subordinate to the dictates of karma and thus his supremacy over soul's actions is destroyed. Madhva, therefore, is forced to say that the past karma on which man's present situation and actions depend has its final roots in Viṣṇu.<sup>83</sup> Thus, though in the circle of transmigratory existence, karma has a certain immediate influence on man's action, yet ultimately Viṣṇu alone is the cause of everything. The reason for this is that he alone is independent and all other beings are dependent on him. As we have noted many times, the dependence of the soul on Viṣṇu extends also to the sphere of action (pravṛtti). Viṣṇu alone is omnipotent, independent; the soul has only very little power and so is dependent on Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is the inner ruler of the soul, he alone is necessarily the independent agent; the jīva has only subordinate, restricted agentship.<sup>84</sup> Madhva illustrates his doctrine by means of an example. A carpenter is an agent, but he is caused to work by a master who is the principal agent. Both the master and the carpenter are real agents; though the latter is subordinate to the former. In our case, Viṣṇu is the principal agent and the soul, the subordinate agent.

82. BSBh. II. 1.36 tasyāpi pūrvaṃ karma karaṇam ity anāditvāt karmaṇaḥ  
Tat. Dī. p. 190 f. Also BSBh. II. 3.42

'karma being eternal (beginningless) the faults of being partial and merciless can in no wise attach itself to Viṣṇu' (BSB. II. 1.36)

83. Tat. Dī. p. 191 Explains the objection  
also BSBh. II. 1.37 na ca karmāpekṣatvena īśvarasyāś-  
vātantryāṃ, dravyaṃ karma ca....  
ibid. Viṣṇu is said to cause 'puṇyam and pāpam'.  
84. BSBh. II. 3.38 The soul has 'alpaśakti', Viṣṇu has 'pūrṇaśakti'

ibid. II. 3.39 The dependent character of the soul is seen from the absence of 'manasamādhāna' in the soul.

The carpenter may be a subordinate agent; still he acts with his own powers. The question now is: does the soul act, though in a subordinate manner, with its own powers and faculties? Madhva would reply that though the carpenter has his own capacity to act independently of the person who makes him work, the soul's power to act comes from Viṣṇu.<sup>85</sup> The dependence of the soul on Viṣṇu as regards activity goes to such an extent that the soul, though a spiritual being, is comparable to a stone.<sup>86</sup> The root of independence does not lie in the spiritual character of a being but in the fact that the inner nature of a being does away with all dependence on other beings. In this sense Viṣṇu alone is independent. All other beings are dependent. This is the reason why Madhva quotes with approval the Mahābhārata verse which says: "Just as a man with a purpose makes a wooden doll dance, or just as a man sets his own limbs and fingers in motion, O king, so does the Absolute Being cause his creatures to act."<sup>87</sup> Again, Madhva argues against the independent activity of souls from man's daily experience. If the soul were independent, then how is it that it does not acquire for itself all that is pleasing and avoid all that is displeasing? Does this mean then that souls are totally unfree in their activity?

It is true that Madhva does not explicitly distinguish ontological independence from moral freedom. Still Madhva accepts that souls possess a limited freedom of activity.

85. BSBh. II. 3.40 The example of the carpenter. Tat. Dī. p. 263 explains the difference between the activity of the carpenter and of the soul.  
ibid. II. 3.41 *sā ca kartṛtvaśaktiḥ parād eva* (i. e. the power of action of the soul)
86. BSBh. II. 1.24 *cetanatve' pay aśmādivad asvatantrat-vāt svataḥ kartṛtvānupapattir jivasya*.  
Tat. Dī. p. 182 Both the non-spiritual and spiritual beings are non-independent and like a stone the soul also cannot by itself do the least thing (*alpam api*).
87. BSBh. II. 1.24 Verse 23 Vanaparva 30.

A king gives to his sons such specific tasks like the protection of the kingdom. In entrusting such missions to the sons, the father also delegates to them a share in his paternal sovereign power. They possess a certain freedom of action, which however, is given to them by the father. Similar is the case with souls.<sup>88</sup> Although they by themselves do not possess the power of free action, still it is given to them by the Supreme Spirit. Viṣṇu guides the *jīva* taking into account its *karma*, its effort and also its aptitude (*yogyatā*). This is the reason why the vedic injunctions and prohibitions are not futile.<sup>89</sup> But is it not true to say that vedic injunctions are irrelevant because the souls are dependent on Viṣṇu for their activity? How can beings who have no independent activity, possess norms and objectives of action given to them by vedic commands and prohibitions?

We have no experience of a fully independent agent having norms of action proposed to him. But we know from our own experience and from reasoning that rules of action are proposed to dependent agents. It is the Lord who imposes rules of action. It is he who proposes the goal. Action itself rests with the *jīva*.<sup>90</sup> The *jīvas* do possess real power

88. Gī. T. N. V. 14 Yathā pitṛdattam pālakatvaṃ rājaputrāṇaṃ evaṃ paramātmadattam kriyā svātantryalakṣaṇaṃ kartṛtvaṃ kriyāniṣpannadharmādirūpakarmaṇi svātantryaṃ ca jivānāṃ apyastītyāsaṅkāṃ pariharati. Jayatīrtha comments : Svato jivānāṃ svatantrakartṛtvādyabhāve' pi paramātmadattam tadasti.

89. BSBh. II. 3.42 tato' prayojkatvaṃ śāstrasya nāpadyate, kṛtaprayatnāpekṣatvāt tatprerakatvasya Jayatīrtha comments : Since the Lord takes into account the beginningless karma, the effort and the *yogyatā* of the souls, śāstra does not become meaningless.

90. This is the view of Rāghavendra-tīrtha. Bh. G. Vṛtti. XVIII. 18. He asserts that obligation implies liberty and also a norm recognized by liberty. Such a norm can come only from the Lord. The sacred texts make it known to us. But the action is performed by the agent, the free subject. "Cetanasya svataḥ pravṛttidarśanāt" (BSBh. II. 2. 2.)



of action. As the action is in progress, the sākṣin has the immediate and infallible experience of its activity.<sup>91</sup> Jīvas' activity in accordance with the given laws of conduct is experienced as a free action. Jayatīrtha analyses the experience of the act of renouncement to show the presence of freedom in the jīva. In the system of Madhva, *manas* is not the lord of our desires. It is only the supportive cause of desires and affections. The spiritual subject is the real possessor and lord of all desires.<sup>92</sup> But there are two types of desires in a man. One type of desire is an attribute of the soul. The other type of desire is the modification of 'manas'. Even in this latter case, the lordship pertains to the soul. This is clear because of the testimony of the sākṣin, which says that it is "I" who desire. In us therefore, there can be at one and the same time two opposing desires. For example in a man there can be the desire for garlands, sandal paste and women. At the same time he can have also the desire to renounce them. The lower desires (*kāma*) are the modifications of the mind (*manas*) the higher desires (e. g. the desire to renounce pleasures) are the attribute of the jīva. Such an experience of conflicting desires manifests the liberty of the jīva, in as much as it refuses to accept the lower desires and embraces the higher ones.<sup>93</sup> Is it not our experience that persons bear great pains for the attainment of a small good?<sup>94</sup> In view of the good to be obtained, some sages like Nārada have borne great sufferings.

Real freedom always implies spontaneity, newness and unpredictability. In the 'substance-essence-universe' of Madhva, where every being is determined by its essential

91. Jayatīrtha on B. S. Bh. II. 2. 2. "aham karomīti cetanasya pravṛttidarśanāt"

Cf. also Jayatīrtha on BSBh. II. 3. 34-35

92. NS. to AV. II. 2.25; *ibid.* 23.

93. AV. II. 2.21. with Jayatīrtha's comments. Cf. specially NS. to AV. II. 2. 23

94. AV. IV. 2.96

nature, by its karma, and finally by the will of Viṣṇu, can the "gifted independence" of the jīva really mean spontaneity and creativity? But what Madhva and Jayatīrtha have to say about the jīvas freedom of action is certainly profound. In the context of the thought of their times, the view they express is indeed original.

### D. Viṣṇu and Man's existence in the Universe

#### 1. The different classes of Men

Ontologically i. e. from the point of view of the inner structure of man, Madhva admits a threefold distinction among men.<sup>95</sup> In our discussion on the nature of the souls, we have mentioned that souls in general are grouped into various categories: there is first of all the eternally liberated soul called Lakṣmī; then we have those souls which are fit for liberation and those which are not fit for liberation. Those which are fit for liberation fall further into five ordered groups or categories: Gods (deva) Sages (ṛṣi) the Fathers (pitṛ) Kings (pā) and Men (nara). The gods occupy the highest place in the hierarchy of souls. Men form the lowest class. Only Ramā or Śrī, the spouse of Viṣṇu is totally free from all imperfections. She is his extremely beloved (atipriyā).<sup>96</sup> But she too is eternally dependent on the Lord.

Vāyu is the god of cosmic power; the Breath or Wind that penetrates all elements. Thus it supports all beings. Vāyu conducts all beings to Viṣṇu. He is like the prince before the king.<sup>97</sup>

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95. Tattvasaṃkhyāna  
ibid.

96. Ch. Up. Bh. VII. 25-26 alpāpi hyamṛtā devī śrīḥ  
purnātīpriyatvata iti ca.  
Cf. also Tattvasaṃkhyāna.

Br. Ā. U. Bh. III 5.4 asya prasādād doṣavarjitā, sadā-  
sukharūpā ca sarvadājñānarūpiṇī

97. Br. Ā. Up. Bh. III 5.9

Those souls which are born into this world as men belong to three categories : those which are fit for liberation (that is, those who have already attained liberation and those who will attain it), those who are destined to wander for ever in this transmigratory existence, and finally, those destined to go to hell.<sup>98</sup> This distinction affects the souls not merely accidentally; it pertains to their very essential nature. This is what is known as the *svarūpabhedavāda* of Mādhvism; the doctrine of the difference in the essential nature of beings.

Madhva would go a step further and apply this theory to the very individuals themselves. For Madhva, each individual man or soul and for that matter each individual being has its own essential nature (*svarūpa*) which is eternally distinct from all the others. Here the western categories of genus, species and individual break down and we have to make an effort to get into the way of thinking of Madhva. All souls are reflections of Viṣṇu; in this, all of them are similar to one another. All the souls fit for salvation are reflections of Viṣṇu with this essential attribute of 'fitness'. But each soul of this class has an essential, incommunicable nature (*svarūpa*) of its own.<sup>99</sup> It is this incommunicable *svarūpa* which makes a man, the individual he is. Madhva's theory of *viśeṣas* and '*bheda*' is once again at the root of this conception of '*svarūpabhedavāda*.'

According to Madhva, the '*svarūpa*' of each '*jīva*' is an aptitude or capacity (*yogyatā*) which the Lord has given to it from all eternity. *Yogyatā* is a certain aptitude or capacity to occupy a definite position, and accomplish certain fun-

98. *Tattvasaṃkhyāna* : *muktiyogāḥ* and *ayogyāḥ*.  
These *ayogyāḥ* are *tamogāḥ śrtisaṃsthitāḥ*.

99. BSBh. II 3.51 *pratibimbānāṃ mitho vaicitrye kāraṇam āha anādividyākarmādivaicitryād vaicityam*.

Tat. Di. p. 271 This *vaicitryam* is *svābhāvikaṃ*

Tat. Pr. on BSBh. 3.51

The very difference in karma, vidyā etc. is ultimately traced to the *svābhāvayogyatā*.

ctions.<sup>100</sup> The hierarchy of jīvas, their functions and their future destiny are all fixed by this Yogyatā. The qualitative differences, which are—possible only in spiritual beings spring from their Yogyatā.

### Man and Society

If each human being is in and through his essence eternally different from all the other finite spiritual beings, how can we speak of a society? In fact neither Madhva nor the Hindu tradition in general has philosophically reflected much on the social nature of man. Is man a social being? What is the nature of society in general? Or what are the inter-relations between society and individual? What is taken for granted by Hindu thought is the existence of caste and caste forms the primary social unit.<sup>101</sup> Each man, and each family first of all belongs to a caste. Caste is the God-willed society in which man has to work for his liberation.<sup>102</sup> The idea of dharma (here the moral order) affects before all, the caste.

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100. Mbh. T. N. XXII. 184-88. svabhāvākhyā yogyatā yā anādi-Siddhā sarvajīveṣu nityā....

The Sāṃkhya too admits the existence of many souls. But in Sāṃkhya the souls do not differ among themselves in their essential nature. (na tu svarūpe kaścid asti parasparato viśeṣaḥ. N. S. quoted by B. N. K. Sharma Op. Cit. p. 199) Such a view is not acceptable to the Mādhvas.

101. P. Hacker explains well the relation between Dharma and 'Varṇāśrama' in his "Dharma im Hinduismus" *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, No. 2. 1965 p. 93 ff. "Dharma ist per definitionem, varṇāśramadharma, das heisst Dharma der Kasten und Lebensstadien" (ibid. p. 95) The whole Dharma literature is based on the assumption that each man belongs to one caste or another.

102. Already in SB. 10, 4.1.9 the transcendental order of timeless and imperishable Being in which all is one and the social structure of Brahmanical society are put in close connection: the Patter receives its eternal sanction from the former. (Cf. R. C. Zaehner, Hinduism, p. 49)

What each one has to practise is the 'caste ethics.' Madhva, like all the other teachers of his time accepts caste, its divine origin, and its absolute character. Within the caste, Madhva accepts the existence of the family and the family duties.<sup>103</sup>

Śūdras and women are excluded from the source of salvific knowledge, viz., the Vedas. The only way open to them to acquire religious knowledge is the Mahābhārata, the fifth Veda.<sup>104</sup> The past karma is given as the reason why one is born as a woman or as a member of such or such a caste.<sup>105</sup>

Though Madhva often compares Viṣṇu to a king in his writings, he seems to have nothing to say about the state as a society, or about man's relation to this society. One thing however, is implied in his occasional remarks on the powers of the king. He alone has absolute and full power in the state. His authority extends over all, and all good things come from the king.<sup>106</sup>

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Cf. also Bh. Gī. IV. 13-18, aham eva hi kartā i. e. of the four castes, and

Madhva's view on the origin of caste. (Bh. Gī IV. 13)

Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. IV. 13

aham eva cāturvarṇyasya kartā

103. In the texts I have studied Madhva does not discuss the nature of family. But 'kāma' (which here may be taken as family life) is accepted by Madhva as one of the ends of human existence. (VTV. 103) The whole of Sadācārasmṛti is written for the use of the householder, for it recommends the naming of one's own children with the name of Viṣṇu. Caste duties are necessary for liberation.

Cf. Bh. Gī. II. 18, 31 etc. *ibid.* IV.

104. Bh. Gī. Bh. Introduction; BSBh. II. 1.3  
Only the Brahmins may study the whole Veda etc.
105. Bh. Gī. IX. 32.
106. VTV. no. 114 The absolute power of kings.  
Ch. Up. Bh. VI. XVI. A comparison between the attitude of a king and of Viṣṇu. etc.



The idea that each soul is a reflection of the Absolute being and hence similar to all others, could have been for Madhva a sufficient philosophical and theological foundation to build up a theory of a human inter-communion. Madhva in fact, does not use the proffered opportunity. From the Bhakti movement Madhva had received the idea of the 'Bhakta Saṃgha' or group of devotees. In his writings Madhva says that a bhakta must seek the company of the devotees.<sup>107</sup> Does the influence of the Bhaktas go beyond the idea of moral example? Madhva says that Prahlada's prayer helped Hiraṇyakāśyapu. The idea that a yogin or one advanced in the practice of asceticism (tapas) can do many wonderful things on or to another person is accepted by Madhva. But this is not what we mean by real human inter-communion. Another sphere, in which one man can be helped by another is the domain of knowledge, especially, salvific knowledge. The usual Indian idea that a good teacher is needed to reach saving knowledge is accepted by Madhva. Madhva writes that the devotees of Viṣṇu have the duty to teach others.<sup>108</sup> A person who seeks to reach liberation must serve the devotees of Viṣṇu. In his work on philosophical discussion (Kathālakṣaṇa) Madhva says that one can reach the subtle truth concerning Viṣṇu more easily by means of group discussions.<sup>109</sup> This shows that groups can be of help to man in his effort to reach liberation.

Since Viṣṇu dwells in all beings one must have a universal, benevolent attitude to all. Dāna, (the giving of gifts and alms) is necessary for a house-holder, a king etc., since it forms part of their āśrama dharma.<sup>110</sup>

107. Von Glasenapp. Op. Cit. pp. 92-93.

108. BSBh. IV. 1.3.

109. Kathālakṣaṇa. The purpose of all sorts of debates : kevalam tattvanirṇayam uddiśya....

110. Bh. Gī. Bh. VI. 32 'sarvatra eka eveśvara'—is the reason.  
ibid. VI. 30.

Between the different grades of spiritual beings, Madhva seems to accept a certain inter-personal (spiritual) relationship. The M. S. S. P. p. 124b, quoting a text from *Gītā Tātparya Nirṇaya* says, that though the Sannyāsins have renounced everything and are not bound by ritual duties, still they too have the possibility of imparting the gifts of knowledge, absence of fear etc to others. (*vidyābhayādīdanam ca sarveṣām api sammatam*) Again, at least once Madhva says that *Hirṇyakāśyapu*, the great enemy of Viṣṇu was saved by the prayers of his son, *Prahlāda*, the great devotee of the Lord. (AV 111.3.113)

The mādhva idea of the hierarchy of beings (especially of souls) evidently tries to integrate the values of the Hindu society of his times. Caste, the hierarchic order of castes and their functional differences are transferred to the world of the gods. The gods belong to different castes. The heavenly world is patterned on the earthly order. But in the state of 'mukti' whether there is any caste distinction is doubtful. Madhva, for example admits that *Brahmā*, the brāhmin god, rules the whole world during one kalpa. But in the next kalpa, he is replaced by another god, who was *Vāyu* (kṣatriya god) in the previous cycle. Thus there is the possibility of a change of caste among some gods. The caste difference among the gods is considered from a functional angle by Madhva. We never get any explicit statements about the existence of caste among liberated souls. But caste with its functional and other differences exist in this world and it is from the Lord.

## **2. Inequality and Evil in the world**

From the above exposition it is abundantly clear that inequality is the characteristic mark of this world. Inequality among souls, inequality arising out of caste and social status, differences arising out of the time and place of one's birth (let us not forget that if one is born in the kṛta yuga he is in a much better position to know Viṣṇu perfectly), affect all finite beings.

That there is evil in this world needs no explanation. There is above all moral evil, which for Madhva primarily consists in man's blasphemous attitude of considering himself equal to or identical with Viṣṇu. The question is : How can we explain the existence of evil ? In the realistic system of Madhva, evil is real and positive and we need therefore, a real positive reason as its explanation.

We have seen that in Mādhvism, Viṣṇu is the universal cause. Is Viṣṇu then, the cause of the inequality and evil in the world ? If Viṣṇu were to be the cause of these things, then partiality and mercilessness should be predicated of him.<sup>111</sup> At the same time we cannot say that Viṣṇu produces all things according to the merits and demerits of these beings, because such a view will make Viṣṇu dependent on 'karma'. This will destroy his independence.<sup>112</sup> How do we get out of this dilemma ?

Can we not get out of the difficulties by supposing that Viṣṇu grants fruits to the various beings (souls) according to their karmas ? If one is happy or sorrowful today the reason for it has to be sought in his past karma. As an unknown text quoted by Madhva says : "The Lord leads souls to happy regions in accordance with their good deeds."<sup>113</sup>

But the difficulty which we have to face now is the following : have we not often said that the *karmas* themselves depend on Viṣṇu ? If the *karmas* are dependent on Viṣṇu the whole present situation, which is said to be dependent on past

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111. BSBh. II. 1.34. sarvakartṛtva vaiṣamyanaighṛṇye tasya....

This objection is answered by the statement that Viṣṇu dispenses pleasure and pain in accordance with the 'beginningless karma' of each soul (ibid).

112. Tat. Di. p. 191 karmāpekṣatve tasyāsvātantryād īśvaratvānupapatteḥ.

113. BSBh. II. I.35 puṇyena puṇyaṃ lokaṃ nayati, pāpena pāpam iti.

karma, becomes really dependent on Viṣṇu alone. This brings us back to our original dilemma<sup>114</sup>

Madhva tries to get out of the difficulty by saying that the chain of past *karms* is beginningless. Every subsequent action is caused by a previous karma. Because the chain is beginningless, Madhva can say that at any given period, Viṣṇu is not merciless or partial because Viṣṇu dispenses the fruits to each being according to the past merits and demerits.<sup>115</sup>

But Madhva himself seems to be conscious of the weakness of this solution. For he remarks that if Viṣṇu were to be so dependent on *karma*, then it would be difficult to speak of Viṣṇu's independence. So Madhva holds that Viṣṇu's dependence on *karma* does not necessarily make him 'non-independent'. The karma which Viṣṇu necessarily takes into consideration before he produces the world is in its turn under the control of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is not dependent on karma in the same way as karma is dependent on him. Viṣṇu just grants the fruits to each being according to its merits, but the very 'sattā' (reality) of the *karma* depends on Viṣṇu.<sup>116</sup>

Once again we are back at our old problem. If the very *sattā* of karma is dependent on Viṣṇu, then we must say that the whole situation is ultimately dependent on Viṣṇu.

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114. *ibid.* II. 1.37 *na ca punar vaiṣamyādy āpātena doṣah*  
Here Madhva quotes the text 'dravyam karma....'

115. *ibid.* II. 1.36.

116. *ibid.* II. 1.36, 37 In 36, the objection that the thing in consideration of which Viṣṇu dispenses fruits, is not karma is mentioned by Madhva.

The beginningless character of karma is not the final solution of the problem.

*ibid.* *karmādinām sattvasyāpi tadapekṣatvāt*

Tat. Dī. p. 191 without the independent (Viṣṇu) no activity will take place.

Even in this case Viṣṇu is not merciless because he is Svātānta.

Here Madhva introduces his svarūpabhedavāda to solve the difficulty. The actions of each being have their roots in the nature of each being.<sup>117</sup> A demon is against Viṣṇu because he is a demon, and a devotee of Viṣṇu is on the right path because his nature is to be a devotee of Viṣṇu.

But neither is this way of looking at our present problem, a help in solving it.

One of the principles of Mādhvism is that the 'svarūpa' of all finite beings eternally depend on Viṣṇu. So ultimately, (not chronologically but ontologically) Viṣṇu is the final explanation of the inequality and evil in the world. But Madhva often says that Viṣṇu causes the beings to perform good and evil deeds in accordance with their past deeds; so that in a sense, Viṣṇu himself cannot do anything to improve or to change the human situation. Since Viṣṇu, the souls, and matter are co-eternal, and since the cosmic cycles move on in accordance with the inner necessity of the various beings, could Viṣṇu himself have done anything or can he do anything now to change the state of things?

So in the last analysis Madhva is faced with an insoluble problem. His basic principles, viz. the absolute independence of Viṣṇu, the difference between the essential nature of each being and especially of each soul, the beginningless, and conditioning character of 'karma' and finally the agentship of the soul cannot be brought together into a harmonious whole. On the present point, for example,

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117. We must here bring in texts from the other works of Madhva.

anādiyogyatām caivam kalivāṇīśvarāvadhiṃ ko nivārayitum śaktah.

(AV. B. N. K. Sharma Op. Cit. p. 271).

Against the Sāṃkhyas, the Mādhvas admit

"Svarūpe kaścid asti parasparato viśeṣaḥ" in the souls.

In AV. II. 4. adh. 5. 6. Madhva says that Karma etc. are rooted in the anādiśvarūpayogyatābheda.



Madhva oscillates from one solution to another as he views the problem of inequality and evil in the world from the angle of one or other of the principles mentioned above. But since the independence of Viṣṇu forms the corner stone of the whole of Mādhvism, can we say that finally the root of the evil and inequality in the universe is to be sought in Viṣṇu's absolute and incalculable will.

Jayatīrtha, in his commentary on the Bh G Bh V. 14 says: 'Man induced by Viṣṇu, acts and makes others act; he himself does not really act or cause others to act independently.'<sup>118</sup> In other texts, Madhva himself says that Viṣṇu causes others to act in a good or bad way as he pleases. But the evil and sufferings of other beings do not make him evil. He may cause others to act evilly, yet he remains unsullied and pure, because he is independent. This point is very interesting because it shows us how Madhva sees evil as ultimately rooted in the nature of finite spirits, which however is totally dependent on the Lord. Yet at the same time the Mādhvas accept that the "Jīvas" can follow the lower desires of *manas*. If the jīvas choose to follow the lower desires, then certainly moral evil would be the result. In this position, moral evil seems to spring from the wrong use of freedom which the embodied spirit makes.<sup>119</sup>

As we have explained in one of the appendices there is no strict doctrine of predestination in Dvaita Vedānta. Moreover, Madhva does not pose the problem of evil in the manner we do now, viz., the existence of evil and suffering on the one hand and the existence of an all knowing, all powerful and all loving personal God on the other. In our preceding discussions, we were in a way, attempting to interpret Madhva's thought from our modern point of view. For him, the existence of 'mukti-ayogya' souls and of suffering of all types in

118. Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gi. Bh. V. 14; BSBh. II. 1.37.

119. AV. II. 25 & NS. on AV. II. 2.23.

this world form part of his teaching on the hierarchy of being 'karma' and God. Each soul acquires merit or demerit according to its svarūpa-yogyatā, effort (pryatna) and past 'karma.' Viṣṇu could be called cruel or partial only if he were to act without taking into consideration the above mentioned factors. As Madhva says : "svabhāvākhyā yogyatā sā haṭhākhyā, sā anadi siddhā Sarvajiveṣu nityā, sā kāraṇaṃ tu, dvitīya manādi karmaiva; tathā tṛtīyah jīvaprayatnah pauruṣkhyastadetat trayam viṣṇorvaśagaṃ sarvadaiva ...

vinā na yatnaṃ no haṭho nāpi karma phalaprado (Mbh. T. N 11. 184-88) (Cf also AV 111. 4.99-93 & 40-45)

When Madhva says that the 'sattā' of all realities (finite) depend on Viṣṇu, we know that what is meant is not existence pure and simple but only their manifest coming to be. Viṣṇu harmonises the different orders of causality. In a way the hierarchic order of realities is the order of justice and grace. God's grace works within that order. The gods for example, cannot lose their fitness for 'mukti' or their knowledge or grade, by sin, though their knowledge is not steady and though they (the gods below Brahmā) can lose some of their acquired qualities. (AV 111.4.4. seq) What comes out of all these discussions is that in Dvaita Vedānta there is no pure or perfect gratuity in God's actions and grace. Though Madhva says that the demon Hiraṇyakāśyapu was saved by the prayer of his son, Prahlaḍa, still he affirms that he was not really a demon but a higher soul who lost temporarily his status. Once his past 'karma' was expiated, Hiraṇyakāśyapu obtained 'mukti'. Since the Lord's actions are not fully gratuitous we cannot make him responsible for the evil in the world. The inner nature and fitness of each soul and its corresponding "prayatna" in accordance with its past 'karma' form at least a partial explanation of the evil in this world.

### **Man in the Universe**

In Mādhvism, the whole universe is made up of a hierarchy of real and ordered spiritual and material

beings. The infinitely perfect and rich Lord is the cause of this pluralistic universe. Each finite spirit with its *svarūpa-yogyatā* (nature-fitness) is the reflection of one or other aspect of the supreme Being. All beings (*padārtha*) have the capacity of being known, though only the spirit alone is endowed with the power of knowledge. Man and his position in the universe are considered by Mādhva in the context of this Lord-willed hierarchy and harmony. Each being is a determinate individual possessing an inner unity yet endowed with qualities and specialities (*viśeṣas*). These individual realities are interrelated. Similarity and generality (*sādrśya* and *sāmānya*) are not fictions of the mind nor abstract ideas. They exist in individual realities binding them together. Both the spiritual and material beings are endowed with causal power, though only spirits can know and will and so enter into moral activity. Because of this causal power being can enter into active relationship. All finite spirits linked to their bodies can through the instrumentality of their bodies enter into contact with the material world and communicate with other spiritual beings. The pre-established rapport between different beings is specially clear in the domain of knowledge and action. In knowledge for example, the senses illumined by the spirit can grasp realities. What is taught in the vedic texts, when taught by a teacher can be understood by a fit student. But can the human spirit go beyond the brute facts presented to it or creatively build new relations? The Mādhvas do not raise such questions in their works. As a matter of fact, the totality of truth was present in the golden age. Time brings about only a deterioration in man's state of knowledge and morality. But the cyclic nature of time assures man of the return of the golden age.

Because of the power of activity granted to spiritual beings, they can through the instrumentality of the faculties of action, act upon the world. The ritual-moral activity of

man does make use of material things. But since liberation in the last analysis is freedom from material bonds, the Hindu tradition does not analyse deeply the human task of transforming this world. It is also to be remembered that in Mādhvism each object is presided over by a god. It is the indwelling gods who make these objects (herbs etc.) effective. Ultimately the hierarchy, the order and the harmony of the universe flows from the unique will of Lord, on whom all beings in every way depend. The souls fit for salvation are in this universe so that they might with the help of Viṣṇu's grace work out their final destiny.

## CHAPTER VI

### VIṢṆU AND MAN'S LAST DESTINY

In the section on 'Viṣṇu and Man' we explained at some length the nature of man and his human condition. We said that all finite spiritual beings, except Lakṣmī have experienced or are experiencing suffering. This means that all of them have been or are in bondage. The finite spiritual beings to whichever class they belong, those which are fit for liberation or those destined to eternal transmigration or to hell, have one thing in common, bondage. The state of bondage affects the very gods, Yogins and the Fathers (pitṛ), for they too are under the influence of desire (kāma) anger (krodha) etc. They too therefore, have to work for their liberation and obtain it finally from the hands of Viṣṇu.

In the last section we concentrated our attention on Man, his nature and his earthly situation. In this present section, too, we shall deal principally with the ultimate destiny of man. But since the mād̥hva doctrine of man is so inextricably intertwined with his teaching on the gods and demons we will necessarily have to make some references to these beings in the course of our investigation.

#### A The Source and Nature of Bondage (bandha)

The Vaiṣṇavite 'catechetical formula' to which we referred often in the preceding pages, says that bondage (bandha), just like creation, support etc., has its origin in Viṣṇu.<sup>1</sup> By this word, bondage (bandha) Jayatīrtha understands the 'uniting or binding of a soul to a subtle body etc.'<sup>2</sup> Hence, as regards

1. BSBh. I. 1.2; AV. I. 1.90, VTV. no. 439

2. VTV. Tī. p. 343 bandhanam liṅgadehādi bandhaḥ  
Cf. also VTV. 109 111



man, the state of bondage is the very human situation itself. The soul's union with the subtle and gross bodies and all the consequences which flow from this union constitute 'bandha'. Bondage, therefore, as we have mentioned in the last section, is beginningless.

In the total idea of bondage, over and above this fact of the soul's union with the bodies, there is another element which is called 'ignorance' (ajñāna or even āvṛti),<sup>3</sup> Viṣṇu 'covers' the soul with ignorance and this action of Viṣṇu is one of his eight activities. Jayatīrtha expresses this by saying that ignorance is from Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu alone. Though Madhva himself has not explicitly defined the nature of bondage, still from his various descriptions of the consequences flowing from bondage, we can see how Madhva thought of it. As a believer in Viṣṇu, Madhva attributes both 'āvṛti', the ignorance which hides the soul from itself, and the union of the soul to matter, to Viṣṇu. Like the union of the soul to matter, ignorance too is beginningless.

Since we have already dealt with the 'soul-body union' in the last chapter, we shall now concentrate our attention a little more on Madhva's explanation of the nature of ignorance. In the system of Madhva, the ignorance with which Viṣṇu envelopes the soul is a positive reality and it is a product of the 'tamoguṇa' of matter.<sup>4</sup>

This ignorance is under the control of Viṣṇu just like all the other non-divine realities. The locus of this ignorance is not Viṣṇu but the soul.<sup>5</sup> In the 'Tattvodyota' Madhvā says

3. BSBh. I. 1.2 etc.

4. For texts Cf.

5. Tattvodyota

Tat. Pr. on BSBh. I. 1.2

B.N.K. Sharma Op. Cit. p. 182;  
Von Glasenapp, Op. Cit. p. 49

pūṅgataṃ eva hi tamaḥ

The soul is of the nature of knowledge etc.

Still the positive ignorance envelopes it.

'tadāśṛitaṃ, tadāvaraṇaṃ cāmna-  
naṃ'.

that 'darkness (i. e. ignorance) is in Man'. Though the soul in itself is the reflection of Viṣṇu and hence possesses 'being, bliss and consciousness', still, because it is under the power of Viṣṇu, he veils it in ignorance. From the previous section on Madhva's view of man, we know that neither the beginningless 'karma', nor the essential nature of each soul can offer an ultimate explanation of bondage. To the question, why the souls should be veiled in ignorance and why it should be united to matter, Madhva cannot give any satisfactory answer either. The law of beginningless karma, with the connected idea of the true agency of the soul, the theory of the essential nature of each soul, and the idea of Viṣṇu's supreme freedom and agency are offered as explanations of our present problem.

The positive ignorance which covers the jīva hides the real nature of the soul from the soul itself. The soul, as a reflection of Viṣṇu, is dependent on him; but though similar to Viṣṇu, it is not identical with him. The veiling ignorance makes the soul forget its dependence (Jīvacchādikā or Svācchādikā-avidyā). This ignorance hides from the vision of the soul also the nature of Viṣṇu, the only Independent Being who is the cause of the origination of the world (paramā-chādikā).<sup>6</sup> Madhva speaks of still another aspect of this positive ignorance, the aspect sometimes called 'māyā', which is at the root of our illusions.<sup>7</sup> Ignorance can also falsify objects just as the green moss covering the surface of a lake falsifies the real nature of the water.<sup>8</sup> Thus the positive ignorance with which

6. NS.

tasya svaprakāśasyāpi jīvasya paramēśvarecchayā paramēśvare svadharmeṣu cājñānam sambhavaty eva / ajñānam api satyam eva nājñānakalpitaṃ.

(Text cited by B.N.K. Sharma, Op. Cit. 189)

7. Bhāg Tat.

Text cited by Von Glasenapp, Op. Cit. p. 77

8. Von Glasenapp, Op. Cit. p. 77

Viṣṇu beginninglessly veils the soul has both a hiding or veiling and a falsifying function.

Before we examine the consequences of bondage, let us briefly remark that bondage in the system of Madhva, is real. Bondage, being part of the cosmic activity of Viṣṇu, is as real as the cosmos itself. As Madhva says, the reality of man's bondage is testified to both by the sacred texts and by the infallible testimony of the 'witnessing self' (sākṣin), which immediately experiences pain, sorrow etc. If bondage should be unreal, then liberation and the sacred texts which teach it and the means to it, would also be unreal.<sup>9</sup> Since Madhva takes the reality of bondage very seriously he can say that we should take the various means to reach liberation too very earnestly.

More important in this present context are the consequences which flow from our bound condition. First of all, the soul in bondage is in the transmigratory state. It is subject to birth, death and rebirth.<sup>10</sup> It is also subject to suffering. The 2nd verse of Madhva's 'Kṛṣṇāmṛta' says that the whole world is afflicted by the three fires, viz. the bodily and psychological suffering, the suffering caused by other earthly beings, and finally, the suffering caused by non-earthly beings. So a man in bondage is always suffering under the load of the threefold pain.<sup>11</sup>

Then there is the soul's identification of itself with the psychosomatic complex. The soul forgetting its real nature identifies itself with its 'ego'. This false identification in its turn brings forth such evils as desire, anger, attachment(kāma,

9. AV. I. 1.16, 17

10. VTV. no. 111

11. Kṛṣṇāmṛta

Also

says that Viṣṇu is the 'binder' of soul with the 'bhāvapāśa'

tāpatrayeṇa saṁtapataṁ yad etad akhilaṁ jagat

saṁsāre śmin mahāghore janma-rogabhayākule

krodha, rāga etc.) which form the driving force of our activities.<sup>12</sup>

In Bh. G. Bh. Madhva says that there are many causes for (our) actions such as anger and desire. According to Jayatīrtha the word 'action' (karma) here stands for evil deed. Madhva writes that 'desire' (kāma) is the greatest enemy of man, because it hinders man from reaching his final destiny.<sup>13</sup> Desire hinders us from knowing truly the nature of Viṣṇu, by obstructing the faculties of knowledge and even by hiding the true nature of the knower himself. A man under the influence of desire attaches himself to sensible objects (rāga). Actions which are rooted in desire are evil.<sup>14</sup>

Another consequence of ignorance is man's independent attitude towards Viṣṇu. The completely dependent soul, identifying itself with its 'ego', imagines itself to be an independent being and agent. It falsely appropriates to itself all the actions it performs.<sup>15</sup> It can go further and consider itself identical with the Supreme Being.<sup>16</sup> The Ch. Up. Bh. gives a very good description of this proud attitude. The soul which is inimical to Viṣṇu, driven by pride says 'I am Brahman', 'the world is unreal', 'I am perfect and powerful',

12. Bh. Gī. Bh. III. 37

13. Pr. Dī. on verse 37 Karmeti pāpaṃ vivakṣitam

14. Bh. Gī. Bh. III. 37 kāma is the enemy of man;  
sarvapuruṣārthavirodhivāt

15. Bh. Gī. Bh. III. 39 'When fire is covered over by smoke,  
or mirror by dirt, there is no real  
transparence. So the "antaḥkaraṇa"  
covered over by kāma does not  
reveal Viṣṇu (also Pr. Dī.)

Pr. Dī says that kāma hinders knowledge  
by hindering—jñeya, jñānakaraṇa,  
and jñātr.

also Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 37  
BSBh. II. 3.35 ff. kāma is the chief inducer to evil.

16. Ch. Up. B. VI. 8-9; VTV. no. 223.

'the world is without God', and, finally, 'the world is not supported by Viṣṇu.'<sup>17</sup> Madhva compares this proud attitude of man to the evil deed of theft. A king punishes an ordinary thief; how much more will he punish a person who tries to steal the very kingship from him? In the system of Madhva, this pride is the greatest evil a man can commit, and obstinacy in this attitude will infallibly lead him to hell. Men blinded by desire, anger etc. give themselves up to their 'egos'.<sup>18</sup> One does not need much insight to see that such comments are directed against the Advaitins who say that the individual self is identical with Brahman.

In A. V. III. 4. 28, Madhva says that the jiva as long as it is in saṃsāra cannot remain without sin.<sup>19</sup> Even the true jñānins are subject to sin, which have begun to produce its fruits. They are also subject to pain.<sup>20</sup> Bondage thus implies the heavy burden of sin accumulated all through a person's transmigratory existence. According to Jayatīrtha, one cannot but commit certain infractions of rules and regu-

17. Ch. Up. Bh. VI.  
8-9

brahmā'hm/asatyam jagat/siddho'  
haṃ balavān etc.

These wicked souls are given over to bad reasoning. They cannot suffer the guṇas of Hari.

18. *ibid.* VI. 16

A king punishes an ordinary thief, how much more will he not punish a person who tries to steal the kingship (Cf. also VTV. no. 220-222). How such wicked souls are given over to egotism : VTV. no.223 They are: 'kāmakrodhābhibhūtātvaḍ ahamkāraavaśaṃ gatāḥ. brahmaste-nāḥ, nīrānandāḥ  
...

Their destiny: teṣāṃ tamaśsarīrāṇāṃ  
tama eva parāyaṇam.

19. AV. III. 4.28

apāpatvaṃ ca naivāsti yāvat-saṃ-sāram asya hi.

20. *ibid.*

ārabdhapāpam astyeva duḥkhaṃ  
ca jñānino'pi hi.



lations; one cannot fully avoid the negligences which come from *manas*, speech and the body.<sup>21</sup>

Bondage seems to be partly a cosmic, material reality. It originates from Viṣṇu. But this cosmic and material reality produces in each man certain 'evil attitudes and actions'. These evil attitudes and actions can rise to such heights that the dependent soul can imagine itself to be an independent being identical with the Absolute Brahman. But how far is man responsible for these attitudes and actions? The root cause of man's attitudes and actions is a material substance, viz. positive ignorance which comes from Viṣṇu. So ultimately the bondage from which we have to be liberated is not merely 'a moral sinfulness' but also the dark, material substance which veils the truth of reality from us. It cannot be denied that bondage in the system of Madhva, has a moral aspect. Desire, anger, attachment, pride etc. which form part of our bondage, do imply attitudes and actions which are contrary to the right order of things. But instead of fixing their roots in the human spirit, Madhva tries to explain them by means of the so called positive ignorance which he makes at least one of the determining causes of all evil.<sup>22</sup>

Given the nature of Madhva's system it is necessary to admit that bondage differs from man to man. The Bondage of a soul fit for liberation is quite different from that of a

21. NS. III 3.18

22. Jayatīrthā

calls this theory "Svabhāvājñānāda". The positive ignorance which hides the real nature of Viṣṇu and also the dependent nature of soul from the soul, is not an illusory reality (*mithyā*) but a positive reality coming to the soul from the 'independent Viṣṇu'.

(Text cited by B. N. K. Sharma, Op. Cit. p. 193). At the same time it must be pointed out that this *ajñāna* does not form "a real part of the nature of soul."

soul which is destined to transmigrate in this world for ever. The first bondage is destructible, the second is indestructible. Just as each soul is different from the others by its very essential nature, so the bondage of each soul in its individuality must be different from that of the others.

It may be of interest to ask and try to answer now the question : does bondage really affect the soul ? The attitude of pride, independence etc. and the actions which flow from them, and ultimately the positive ignorance itself, which is the root of all evil—do these factors really touch the nature of the soul or do they only affect the psycho-physical sphere of man ? We have seen that the soul is a real agent. Does this mean that the evil actions of the soul make it wicked ? Madhva has not explicitly posited these questions. Since Madhva thinks in terms of the essential nature of man, it may be more in accordance with the mind of Madhva to say that some souls are wicked by nature and others good by nature. The 'āsura' souls which are always inimical to Viṣṇu or the souls destined to go to hell are wicked by nature. Their wicked actions are nothing but the external manifestation of their inner wickedness. This answer is however, not sufficient to solve our difficulty, because the good souls, while in bondage, do perform some evil actions. This fact makes it legitimate for us to ask do these evil actions make the good souls to some extent evil ?

In order to answer this question we have to make an important distinction. Madhva as a philosopher, cannot admit that bondage or the consequences of bondage really touch the essential nature of the soul. Such a view would be incompatible with his idea of Viṣṇu and of the soul. But Madhva as a religious man, who is conscious of Viṣṇu's absolute greatness and his own unworthiness before the majesty of Viṣṇu, seems to teach that the actions we perform really affect our inner reality.<sup>23</sup>

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23. Madhva limits very much the possibility of human freedom. In fact commenting on Br. A Up. VI. 4.5 "God makes man

What we have said above has not solved all the problems connected with man's bondage. But we have come to know to some extent, the nature of the state from which we seek liberation. We have to be liberated from desire, anger, attachment; we have to be liberated from our merits and demerits we have to be liberated from our two material bodies; and finally we have to be liberated from the positive ignorance itself, with which Viṣṇu has covered us from beginningless times.

## **B. The Source and Nature of Liberation (mukti or mokṣa)**

We have seen the state or the situation from which we have to be freed. Now we have to try to examine briefly the source and nature of liberation in the system of Madhva. Once we know to some extent what Madhva understands by liberation, it becomes easier for us to see why Madhva advocates such or such a means to attain it.

### **I. Viṣṇu, the Giver of Liberation**

In the system of Madhva, Viṣṇu is the giver of Liberation. Just as creation, support etc. of the universe, and just as union of the soul to matter and its veiling by ignorance are from Viṣṇu, so is the freeing of the soul from the fetters of transmigration, the work of Viṣṇu.<sup>24</sup> Bondage implies two elements : ignorance which veils the soul (ajñāna or āvṛti), and the union of the soul to matter (bandha). Both these elements have their origin in Viṣṇu. Correspondingly liberation will also imply two elements : knowledge (jñāna) and liberation (mukti) which is the freeing of the soul from its bondage to the bodies. According to Madhva, Viṣṇu is the

good or bad. He makes man virtuous by the virtue he himself induces him to do. He make man sinful by the sin he has induced." So it is not easy to give a clear answer.

24, BSBh. I. 1.2; AV. I. 1.2

giver of both jñāna and mukti. In his commentary on the VTV, Jayatīrtha writes that Viṣṇu alone produces knowledge (jñānotpādana) and the release of the good souls.<sup>25</sup> In the system of Madhva, of the eight activities of Viṣṇu, four, viz. creation, support, government and the dissolution of the world are cosmic in character, i. e., they are actions on the cosmos in general; the four other activities, viz., the veiling of the soul by ignorance and the binding of the soul to matter, the granting of knowledge and the freeing of the soul from matter, are personal in character, i. e., they affect the finite spiritual beings.

That the final liberation is the work of Viṣṇu is expressed in different ways by Madhva. 'Without the favour of Viṣṇu, liberation cannot be attained'.<sup>26</sup> 'To the ignorant Viṣṇu grants knowledge, to the knower release and to the released he grants bliss'.<sup>27</sup> In Kṛṣṇāmṛtamahārṇava (Sl 35) Madhva says that when some one commits sin, repentance is born in him. But the best way to purify oneself is the invocation and remembrance of Hari's name. In Sl 36 (not found in all editions) it is said that the power of Hari's name is greater than the power of the soul to commit sin. But according to the Dvaitins penitence and purification (and liberation too) are granted by Viṣṇu not to all souls but only to the mukti-yogya ones.

Viṣṇu alone can be the giver of final release, because it is he who has bound the soul to the state of transmigration. The soul being a dependent entity cannot free itself from its fetter by its own strength.

Before we enter into the discussion on the nature of liberation, it is necessary to make a preliminary remark. Madhva like all the other Hindu thinkers distinguishes between tem-

25. VTV. Tī. p. 343

26. VTV. no. 105

27. AV. 15

sāttvikānāṃ jīvanāṃ mokṣaṇaṃ

Nārāyaṇaprasādaṃ ṛte na mokṣaḥ.

ajñānaṃ jñānado Viṣṇur jñānināṃ  
mokṣadaś ca saḥ ānandadaś ca  
muktānāṃ....

porary and final release.<sup>28</sup> Temporary release does not free the soul finally and once for all from the bonds of matter. It means that a soul which has accumulated merits in the past lives is born in one of the worlds above and remains there till it has exhausted the accumulated merits.<sup>29</sup> Once the merits are exhausted the soul returns to its earthly existence. In this section on *mukti* we intend to deal not with such temporary release, but only with the *mādhva* concept of final release.

## 2. What is Liberation ?

Liberation is called the highest end of man.<sup>30</sup> The other three objectives, right conduct (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*) and family love (*kāma*) are ephemeral. They are not unmixed good. They are mixed with pain. Liberation alone is the ultimate and unmixed good of man.<sup>31</sup>

In the thought of Madhva, liberation has both a negative and a positive aspect : Liberation is freedom from something; it is also the attainment of something. In the B. S. Bh III. 1, 1. Madhva says that liberation is the soul's freedom from the material elements to which it is chained.<sup>32</sup> According to the *Kaṭh Up. Bh.* p. 13 release is said to be the soul's total liberation from the body.<sup>33</sup> Here the word special or full (*viśeṣeṇa*) stands for the total freeing of the soul from matter. The commentary of Madhva on III Muṇḍ. II. 5 says that release implies freedom from all bodies. Since complete liberation of the soul from matter happens only at death it is said that *mukti* is death. In B. S. Bh. release is defined as freedom

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28. 'Svarga' stands for temporary release; *mukti* or *mokṣa* for final release.

29. BSBh. III. 1.8 10

30. VTV. no. 1.2 Sarvapuruṣārthottoamaḥ

31. VTV. nos. 103, 104

32. BSBh. III. 1.1

33. *Kaṭh Up. Bh.* p. 13 dehād viśeṣeṇa mocanaṁ nāma *mukṭiḥ*



from transmigration (saṃsāra).<sup>34</sup> It is also spoken of as 'the dissolution of the karmas which have started to produce fruits'.<sup>35</sup> If we take these various statements together we can get a fair idea of the negative aspect of release. The soul which is a reflection of Viṣṇu, and which is of the nature of being, bliss and consciousness, is freed from the extraneous elements which are now 'covering' it.

Positively, release means the soul's attainment of its real and original nature in all its purity and fullness. There are many passages in the writings of Madhva and especially of Jayatīrtha which teach that release is the final and definitive coming of the soul to itself.<sup>36</sup> Through the favour of Viṣṇu the hidden essential nature of the soul becomes manifest and it comes to its own natural knowledge and bliss. Just as the virility of a man is potentially present in him even in childhood, though it becomes manifest only when he reaches manhood, so the soul's being, knowledge and bliss are beginninglessly present in it, though in a hidden manner, and become manifest when the Lord through his favour removes the veil of ignorance from it.<sup>37</sup> As an unknown text quoted in the commentary says : strength, bliss, energy etc. are the essential attributes of the soul; these become manifest through the agency of the Lord.<sup>38</sup> The bliss which the soul experiences from the moment of release is not anything new; rather release is the final unveiling of the soul to itself through the favour of Viṣṇu. In the Sāṃkhya system too release is thought of as the soul's final discovery of itself.<sup>39</sup> But that system does not admit that this happens through the favour of the Absolute

34. BSBh. III. 3.32

35. Tat. Dī. p. 348

36. Tat. Pr. on BSBh. II. 3.31 prārabdhakarmakṣaya eva hi muktih  
balaṃānanda ojaś ca saḥ  
jñānam anākulaṃ svarūpāny eva  
jīvasya....

Cf. also BSBh. II. 3.31 Introduction

37. BSBh. II. 3.31

38. ibid. cf. also Tat. Dī. 253 ff.

39. Cf. E. Frauwallner, Vol. I. p. 374 ff.

Being. For Madhva on the other hand, the soul cannot come finally to itself without the favour and action of Viṣṇu.

It is this same point, which is taught when Madhva says that release is the soul's attainment of similarity to Viṣṇu.<sup>40</sup> We know that the soul, being the eternal reflection Viṣṇu, is eternally similar to him. Viṣṇu himself, through his activity of veiling and binding hides this similarity temporarily from the jīva. When the Lord removes the veil of ignorance from the jīva, it becomes the conscious possessor of its innate similarity to him.

In a few texts, mostly quotations from the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇas, Madhva tries to bring out another aspect of his teaching on liberation. 'Having approached the Blissful (one) he (the released soul) taking the form according to his desire wanders (in delight) through the world eating the food he desires.'<sup>41</sup> Having come to the Supreme Light (Viṣṇu) the the released soul stands revealed in his own natural form. There he moves about eating, playing and rejoicing with women and chariots or with selves liberated along with him or in the earlier epochs.<sup>42</sup> In Madhva's commentary on the 4th book of the B. S., he explicitly admits that the released souls have bodies formed out of pure matter (sattva) and that they take on, as they please, other bodies and enjoy various pleasures.<sup>43</sup> A citation from Tait. Up.V. 11.8 says : 'having entered the blissful, the released soul eats what it wills, drinks what it chooses, sports as it pleases or ceases to do anything at will.'<sup>44</sup>

As we read these and similar texts in Madhva's writings, we get the impression that Madhva considered the released

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40. Kath Up. p. 17  
Cf. also BSBh. III. 2. 18

41. VTV. no. 277

42. ibid. no. 271

43. BSBh. IV. 4. 10 ff.

44. BSBh. IV. 4.15

state in very anthropomorphic terms. It may be that through the employment of these anthropomorphic expressions, Madhva is trying to bring out the aspect of bliss in the state of liberation. The released soul is in bliss. There is nothing lacking to it in the enjoyment of its bliss.

In the system of Madhva, release implies not only the soul's 'discovery' of itself or the complete fulfilment of all its desires, but also the soul's intimate union with Viṣṇu. Mukti is described by Trivikrama as the soul's attainment of Nāyār-ayana (Viṣṇu).<sup>45</sup> It may be described as the cleaving of the soul to Viṣṇu, like an arrow to an object.<sup>46</sup> It is the crossing over to the other shore i. e., to Viṣṇu; or the soul's repose in Hari.<sup>47</sup>

Release is thus not merely the going of the soul to the world of Brahman; but it is the soul's going to the Supreme Being himself.<sup>48</sup> In release, there is the aspect of the immediate vision of Viṣṇu.<sup>49</sup> According to Madhva, though bliss is the predominant aspect of the liberated soul, still there is also the immediate vision of the Lord. Madhva says that according to the teaching of the sage Jaimini the liberated souls enjoy, though in a very remote manner. the very enjoy-

45. Tat. Dī. on BSBh. III. 1.1

Nārāyaṇaprāptiḥ muktiḥ

46. Kaṭh. Up. B. p. 14 śaravat tanmayo bhavet

47. Bh. Gī. Bh. XII. 5, 6, 7.

48. Bh. Gī. Bh. VI. 28

49. Kaṭh Up. Bh. p.19 Just as on a day, when there is neither too much light, nor too much shadow, one sees (things) most clearly, so is the highest Person seen in the Brahman—World. The indirect vision of Viṣṇu is compared to the seeing of One's face in a mirror.

ments of the Lord.<sup>50</sup> As another text says : "the released sees through Brahman, through him (it) he hears and only through Brahman he experiences everything."<sup>51</sup> So release or liberation (mukti), which is the highest objective of man, according to the teaching of Madhva, is not the mere self-possession of the soul in all its purity. It is above all the intimate union of the soul with Viṣṇu. What Madhva is at pains to affirm is that the released soul is not merely in a painless or sufferingless state, but that it possesses positive bliss. This positive bliss is obtained only through the grace of Viṣṇu.

In his effort to prove to his opponents that his teaching is in accord with the past orthodox tradition, Madhva takes into his system the Sāṃkhya idea of 'kaivalya', viz. the isolation of the spirit from matter;<sup>52</sup> the anthropomorphic way of considering release as a sort of eternal sensual enjoyment of various pleasures; and finally the theistic view of release which teaches that the released soul is in union with the Supreme Being. Since these three ways of looking at release cannot be easily harmonised, we get the impression that Madhva has

50. BSBh. IV. 4.4; *ibid.* III. 3.33. teaches that liberation implies positive bliss.

It is good to bring out two important points of this doctrine. In the state of release, the souls keep their individuality and identity. As Madhva says; "if the ātman is not existing, then why bliss or that which is pleasing"!(*ātmābhāve pumārthaḥ ka iṣṭasyātmā avadhi-ryateḥ*) Moreover, mukti is positive and supreme bliss. It is not the mere absence of pain. In liberation there cannot be the cancellation of knowledge, for bliss implies consciousness. (*mahānandaṃ ca bhogam ca bhogam ca niyamena vadanti hi. Jñānarūpasya vigñāna-nāśaḥ tannāśa eva tat*) Without joy, without that which is agreeable, what is mukti?

51. *ibid.* Brahmanā paśyati, bharamaṇā śrnoti brahmaṇe 'va idaṃ sarvaṃ aubhavati.

52. The Sāṃkhya-Yoga term 'kaivalya' occurs in VTV. no. 111.

really no unified doctrine of release. As we have said above, the central point of Madhva's teaching on our present topic is that release is unalloyed bliss and that Viṣṇu is the giver of release. Towards the end of this chapter, we will have to take up this topic again when dealing with the nature of the released state.

### **C. The Means to reach Liberation (sādhānavicāra).**

We have seen the state or situation from which man has to be liberated. We have described to some extent the nature of liberation itself. We must now examine the way or ways through which man can reach this final objective. But before we begin explaining the teaching of Madhva on the different ways of reaching liberation, it is necessary for us to make a few preliminary remarks, in order to avoid all misunderstanding.

(1) What we say here concerning the means for release applies only to those souls which are fit for release. The other souls which are 'destined to transmigrate in this world or to go to hell' are not fit to make use of these means. These souls by their very nature and because of their 'karma', both of which are beginningless, are incapable of reaching 'final bliss.'<sup>53</sup>

(2) Even a superficial knowledge of Madhva's writings will convince anyone that it is impossible to bring Madhva's teaching on the means of release into a perfect logical unity. The way of works, the way of knowledge, the way of devotion, and finally the idea of 'God's favour' are all to be met with in Madhva's writings. In our exposition of the present subject, we shall use Madhva's central teaching, viz., Viṣṇu's absolute supremacy and independence and the dependence of all souls on Viṣṇu, as the principle of interpretation and unification.

(3) In the section on 'Viṣṇu and Man' we explained that in the system of Madhva the soul is a real agent. In fact



Madhva defends the reality of the action of the soul by appealing to the reality of release.<sup>54</sup> Release is something real and one has to achieve it by doing something real. Jayatīrtha says explicitly that man must act in order to reach release.<sup>55</sup> Though release is finally a gift from the hands of Viṣṇu, still this gift has to be merited by man. This means that Madhva considers the way of work, the way of knowledge and finally the way of devotion as activity from the side of man. In the system of Madhva the process of the purification of the spirit from the stain of matter is an active process. The soul in search of release is an intensely active being.

(4) Since Von Glasenapp's exposition<sup>56</sup> of our present topic is, as far as details are concerned, quite good, we shall avoid all unnecessary repetition and concentrate our attention on examining how Madhva's teaching on 'liberation' throws further light on his idea of God.

### 1. The way of Works (*karmamārga* or *karmayoga*).

Jayatīrtha describes the way of works as the performance of the actions imposed on one by one's caste or state of life (*varṇa*, *āśrama*) with a mind devoted to God, and at the same time without any desire for results.<sup>57</sup> Since in this description, the first point mentioned is the performance of the caste duties and the duties of one's state of life, let us also begin our exposition with a short analysis of these duties.

We have said that Madhva like all other Hindu teachers accepted caste and the various states of one's life as unchangeable and absolute institutions. In his *Bh. Gī. Bh.* especially in his comments on the 3rd and 5th chapters, Madhva insists on the necessity of conforming oneself to and practising all

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54. Cf. p. 155.

55. *Tat. Pr.* on *BSBh.* II. 3.35; Also *Tat. Di.* p. 262.

56. Von Glasenapp, *Op. Cit.* p. 80 ff.

57. *Pr. Di.* on *Bh. Gī. Bh.* v. i.

the caste and 'āśrama duties'.<sup>58</sup> But Madhva goes into details in his small treatise called, 'Sadācārasmṛti'. How a man should get up from sleep; how he should clean his mouth and have his ritual bath; how he has to practice breathing etc. are all minutely described there.<sup>59</sup> Food habits and prescribed fasts are minutely discussed.<sup>60</sup> All these daily acts are to be performed along with the utterance of the name of Viṣṇu and meditation on the supremacy of Nārāyaṇa. The worship of Viṣṇu's symbols, the naming of one's children 'Nārāyaṇa', the making of pilgrimages to holy places, and above all the worshipping of Viṣṇu's images, are proposed as commendable exercises of vaiṣṇava piety.<sup>61</sup>

It is needless to go into the details of the rituals which Madhva describes in his various works. Madhva's general principle that a person who wants to reach release must perform all prescribed and avoid all prohibited actions, is what is important to us. The further question which we have to answer now is : in what way is the way of works salvific ?

(1) The first necessary characteristic of an action in order that it be salvific, is that it be done without any desire for its fruit. This idea finds its fullest expression in Madhva's commentary on the Bh. Gī.<sup>62</sup> What is forbidden is the performance of actions for the sake of their fruits. When a person performs, say, the Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice for the sake of 'heaven' (svarga) he will attain only heaven i.e. temporary release.<sup>63</sup> When the Bh. Gī. speaks of 'renunciation of action

58. For details Conf. Bh. Gī. Bh. III. 3. with the Pr. Di. of Jayatirtha : Cf. also *ibid.* 4.

59. *Sadācārasmṛti*—verses 13 ff.

60. Bh. Gī. Bh. IV. 30 with Pr. Di. According to Madhva, the regulation of food is a type of Yajña.

Cf. also *Kṛṣṇāmṛtamahārṇava* : Verse, 124 ff.

61. *Sadācārasmṛti*; *Tantrasārasaṃgraha*.

62. Bh. Gī. Bh. V. 1-6 with Pr. Di.

63. B.N.K. Sharma, *Texts in BSBh. III. 1. 8-10*  
Op. Cit. p. 284,

(*karmasanyāsa*), it does not mean pure inactivity, but action without desire. The householders are not asked by Madhva to leave their duties and take up the life of wandering ascetics. They should remain in their state and fulfil their obligations. Madhva rejects the idea that one can obtain release by pure inactivity. 'Release from bondage is obtained when one is not desirous'.<sup>64</sup> If we take the comments of Madhva on Bh. Gī. V, 1-2 it becomes crystal clear that for Madhva, real renunciation is non-attachment.

Jayatīrtha says, 'the real worship of Kṛiṣṇa is the performance of actions with a mind intent upon him'.<sup>65</sup> So the performance of one's duties without attachment, without desire or inordinate feeling must be balanced by the positive quality of one's full dedication to Viṣṇu. Madhva says : in a Yogin (in our context a performer of action as opposed to a *Sāṃkhyin* = knower) there must be a mind offered to Viṣṇu.<sup>66</sup>

(2) For Madhva, an action, even an objectively good action, is not salutary when it is detached from knowledge. There is a *mādhva* text which says that an action without attachment is an action which arises from knowledge (*jñānapūrvam karma*).<sup>67</sup> We already know what that knowledge is in which our action should be rooted, in order that it be salutary. It is our firm conviction that Viṣṇu alone is the supremely independent being and that we consequently are dependent on him. Such a conviction implies also the truth that we are not really and truly the agents of our actions. An

64. Bh. Gī. Bh. III. 4 abandhakatvaṃ tv akāmenaiva  
bhavati na karmatyāga eva mokṣa-  
sādhanaṃ

65. Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. matpūja madarapaṇabudhyā karmā-  
Bh. V. 2 nuṣṭhānaṃ

66. Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. 'Viṣṇavarpaṇabudhiḥ'  
Bh. V. 6

67. Bh. Gī. Bh. III. 4 'niṣkāmaṃ jñānapūrvam....'  
Aslo Kath. Up.  
Bh. p. 12

agent must have the awareness that Viṣṇu, who is dwelling in him, is the principal agent of all his actions.<sup>68</sup> This is the reason why Madhva says that only the ignorant speak of knowledge (Sāṃkhya) and action (Yoga) as distinct. According to the system of Madhva, the ascetic must act and the householder must know. As he says in his Muṇ. Up. Bh. 'a real knower of Viṣṇu, when not in self-oblivious meditation must perform all his duties and must be a teacher of the sacred tradition among the seekers of Brahman'.<sup>69</sup> Madhva admits the possibility of two types of good persons. According to the will of the Lord some like Sanaka are established in knowledge (jñānaniṣṭāḥ). They give up the activities connected with family life etc. But there are others who like Janaka are established in knowledge though they take up the path of family duties. Both groups follow their respective path, both contribute to the welfare of the world. (Bh. Gī. Bh. III. 4) So in the system of Madhva knowledge and action go hand in hand though Madhva subordinates action to knowledge,

(3) What exactly is the function of action in our search for release? The answer to this question may be found in the following two sentences; one taken from Madhva and the other from Jayatīrtha. The desireless doers of action (rituals), writes Madhva attain liberation through knowledge, which arises from the purification of the 'antaḥkaraṇa' (mind). Action, having purified the intellect, helps (man) in the hearing etc. of the Vedas.<sup>70</sup> And Jayatīrtha writes that 'the way of action is a means to knowledge'.<sup>71</sup> If these two quotations express the mind of Madhva, then action is viewed here as a

68. Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. Bh. V. 13

The word 'Sannyāsa' means karṭṛtvābhimānatyāgaḥ and kārayitṛtvābhimānatyāgaḥ

69. III. Muṇ. 1.4

70. Bh. Gī. Bh. V. 5

akāmakarmaṇām antaḥkaraṇaśudhyā jñānam mokṣo bhavati yogasya jñānasādhanaṭvam

71. Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. Bh. V. 5

means to knowledge. A salutary action is salutary in as much as it helps man to purify his inner faculty of knowledge and thus helps him to reach a higher knowledge. The salutary action both presupposes true knowledge and prepares the agent for further knowledge.

In Mādhvism, the way of works by itself cannot lead us to final liberation. Yet through works one can get rid of the lower desires springing from 'manas'. A genuine searcher after liberation must fulfill all his social and ritual obligations. Even the jñānin who has obtained a vision of God is as much bound to the performance of his duties, as one, who has not obtained such a vision. "It is not I who act, but Hari. All my actions form the cult I render to him. Though it is I who perform the cult, yet the performance is by his grace alone".<sup>72</sup> To the mind of Madhva, it is the Lord's grace, which makes the way of works purifying and effective. The performance of 'dharmic' actions produces in the seeker after Viṣṇu, detachment (vairāgya) from the inferior goals of life, viz, riches (artha) and pleasure (kāma). There is a detachment from the lower desires of man, which springs from the disgust one feels towards the miseries of this transmigratory existence. There is also a superior detachment, which is the fruit of one's realization of the superiority of the qualities of the Lord.<sup>73</sup> Thus the way of works, though not a direct means for liberation nor a constitutive element of jñāna or bhakti, is still a preparation for higher knowledge and devotion.

'Whatever one does with knowledge becomes more efficacious'.<sup>74</sup> By works, the fruits of knowledge become

72. Gī. T. N. III. 22      nāhaṃ kartā hariḥ kartā tatpūjā  
karma cākhilam, tathāpi matkṛtā-  
pūjā tatprasādena nānyathā

73. AV. III. 3. 7 and      on this verse.  
N. S.

74. BSBh. III. 4.4      yad eva vidyayā karoti śraddhyo'-  
paniṣadā tad eva vīryavattaraṃ  
bhavati.



enhanced.<sup>75</sup> The sacrifices, 'agnihotra' etc. give an enhanced bliss to the released. From these few citations we can already see that according to Madhva, the way of action does not only prepare one for further salutary knowledge, but it also has some influence on the degree of bliss which a soul will have, once it has attained release.

## 2. The Way of Knowledge (Jñānamārga).

It has already been remarked how knowledge is implied in salutary action and how the 'knower of truth' should be a doer of 'duties' and the 'doer of duties' a knower of truth. In spite of the repeated statement of this doctrine, Madhva was not willing to put 'action' and 'knowledge' on the same level. Even for Madhva, knowledge as such is superior to action and hence has a greater efficacy in our quest for liberation. In fact, when we read some of the statements of Madhva we might get the impression that for him knowledge alone is the means for release. 'A wise man having shaken off merits and demerits, as a pure soul attains release'.<sup>76</sup> In the same work the knowledge of Viṣṇu, is given as the highest and all-perfect way to reach liberation. The means to attain release is the knowledge of that which is designated by the word 'Self',<sup>77</sup> At first sight, these and other similar texts may seem to prove that Madhva was an out and out gnostic. But if we take the total system of Madhva, and interpret his various statements in accordance with his general principles, then there cannot be any doubt that Madhva though admitting the inner worth of knowledge, does not in any way make knowledge the only way of libera-

75. BSBh. III. 4.9.33. Also *ibid.* IV. 1.16

76. VTV. no. 281  
tadā vidvāṇ puṇyapāpe vidhūya  
nirajñānaḥ paramaṁ sāmyam  
upaiti

77. *ibid.* 461  
AV. I. 1.129

AV. I. 1.11

ātmasābdoditasyaiva jñānaṁ muk-  
tau sādhanam

tion. In fact, for Madhva, knowledge is significant only as an element of devotion.

Let us begin our analysis of the 'way of knowledge' by an enumeration of the truths which one should know in order to reach release. The true nature of Viṣṇu and the real nature of all the non-divine realities should be known by all who are desirous of reaching release. Viṣṇu must be known as the only independent and Supreme Being, who is the creator, support etc. of the whole universe.<sup>79</sup> This Viṣṇu is endowed with all qualities and is completely distinct from all other beings, including the liberated souls. He is the inner ruler of all and the real cause of all actions. In Viṣṇu there is no inner division or multiplicity : his body, qualities, actions and manifestations are not 'different' from him. The soul must know that it is a dependent being : dependent on Viṣṇu as regards its essential nature, action and knowledge.<sup>79</sup>

The hierarchy of beings is another important doctrine of Dvaita Vedānta. The absolute sovereignty of Viṣṇu is not touched by the gradation of beings, or by the veneration, inferior beings render to the gods. On the contrary, they only enhance it. All the gods are dependent on the Lord. But since they are superior to us human beings, we have devotion towards them. Knowledge (correct) of the different grades of gods and devotion to the superior beings are necessary to obtain 'mukti'. As Madhva says : It is necessary to have the highest devotion to Viṣṇu. But according to the hierarchic order, devotion is to be cultivated towards others". (AV III. 3 103, 102).

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78. Īś. Up. Bh. 1; 5,6  
BSBh. I. 1.2 AV.  
I. 1.90 ff.

79. VTV. nos. 224,  
225; Kāth.  
Up. Bh. p. 13 III  
Mund. 1.4.

It is from the study of the 'sacred texts', that one has to reach these essential truths. The very first Sūtra of the B. S. enjoins on us an enquiry into the nature of Brahman.<sup>80</sup> The soul possessing the necessary dispositions must inquire into Brahman, into the purport of all the sacred texts and into the primary meaning of all their words with the aid of his favour, in order to reach final release. So, one can finally reach true knowledge only through the study of the sacred tradition.

The study of the sacred tradition, however, is not a pure intellectual exercise; it presupposes both moral dispositions and caste qualifications. We have already pointed out that the lower castes and women have no access of the Vedas. They have to be satisfied with the study of the Māhābhārata, which Madhva calls the 5th Veda. Among the many moral qualifications which a true student should possess, a few may be picked out for special treatment here. 'Steady reliance on Viṣṇu (śānti), the checking of pride (dama) satisfaction with Viṣṇu, who dwells in one's heart (uparama), the endurance of the pairs of opposites (titikṣā) and the absence of anger (kṣamā) should be found in a true seeker after truth.<sup>81</sup> Since attachment to sensible things hinders a true search after truth one must cultivate 'vairāgya', i. e. detachment from ephemeral things. The student of the Vedas must by the faithful fulfillment of all his duties, prepare himself for the reception of the truths.<sup>82</sup>

80. BSBh. I. 1.1; AV.  
I. 1.11

81. BR. Ā. Up. Bh.  
IV. 4.22

82. BSBh. III. 4. 27

Śāntis tu bhagavān-niṣṭhā damo  
madavinigrahaḥ etc.

Yadyapi jñānenaive mokṣo niyatas  
tathāpi jñāni śamadamādyupetaḥ  
syāt

Tat. Dī. pp.414-415

Madhva calls 'śānti etc. 'aṅgāni' of  
Jñānam

The sacred texts have to be learnt from a teacher. As Madhva says, the teacher who seeks release has the duty to teach the truth of Viṣṇu to his pupils,<sup>83</sup> and the pupils who seek knowledge must receive it from a qualified teacher.<sup>84</sup> Ch, Up tells us that only he who has a preceptor knows the Absolute.<sup>85</sup> From the teacher the pupil expects not only the mere imparting of knowledge, but above all, his favour (prasāda).<sup>86</sup> In the acquirement of truth the favour of one's teacher is more important than one's own efforts.<sup>87</sup>

The effort of the 'student' for the acquiring of truth consists in the following four exercises—'Hearing' (śravaṇa), reflection (manana), the fixing of one's whole mind upon the truths heard and reflected upon (nididhyāsna),<sup>88</sup> and a

83. BSBh. IV. 1.3

84. *ibid.* III. 3.44 yathā gurudattaṁ tathaiva bhavati  
ācāryavān puruṣo veda

85. Ch. Up. VI. 14.2

86. BSBh. III. 3.45 guruprasādo balavān na tasmād  
balavattaram

87. *ibid.* III. 3.44-45 The Hindu tradition attaches the greatest importance to the role of *guru* in the acquirement of our final goal. It is the guru who knows the right time when we should hear, reflect upon and meditate on the sacred texts. The grace of one's guru is the principal cause of the final vision (AV. III. 3.204) As a rule one should not leave one's guru. If a guru of eminent qualities is found, one may leave an inferior teacher even without his permission (AV. III. 3.205) Ofcourse the 'guru' must be a realized person, learned and endowed with authority. (Tantra-sāra. 126-130)

88, *ibid.* III. 3.43 tatvaniścayo vedārthanīyamaś ca  
brahmadṛṣṭeḥ pṛthag eva. 'ātmā vā  
are dṛṣṭavyaḥ, śrotavyaḥ, manta-  
vyāḥ; nididhyāsītavyaḥ' (Br. Ā. Up.  
IV. 4.5)

fourth exercise called 'upāsana', which according to Madhva takes the form of either remembrance (smṛti) or of meditation (dhyāna). Though etymologically the word 'śravaṇa' means any hearing, still in our context, as Jayatīrtha points out, it means the 'hearing and understanding of the truth contained in the sacred text'.<sup>89</sup> The fruit of such a hearing is the knowledge of truth. 'Manana' stands for the mental process by which one reaches the certainty that the grasped meaning alone is the real sense of the sacred texts. These two activities must be carried on until we reach the vision of Viṣṇu.<sup>90</sup> 'Nididhyāsana' as explained by 'Nyāyāmṛta' is continuous thought which is centred on the truths taught in the sacred texts.<sup>91</sup> Though I am unable to distinguish between 'nididhyāsana' and upāsana,<sup>92</sup> still it is clear that both these activities in the system of Madhva imply an element of worship, an internal attitude of humble acknowledgement of Viṣṇu's absolute supremacy and sovereign power. He who is desirous of release must always reverence Viṣṇu as the supreme self.

'Upāsana' is the most important step in the path of knowledge.<sup>93</sup> Hence it demands our further attention and

89. Tat. Pr. on BSBh. III. 3.43 *ibid.* tatvajñānaṃ hi śravaṇaphalaṃ, mananaṃ ca vedārthanirṇayaṃ

90. BSBh. IV. 1.12 Tat. Pr. p. 444 Yāvan mokṣas tāvad upāsanādi kāryam

91. Nyāyāmṛta. niranantarā cintā nididhyāsanam ucyate

92. We have attempted to define Madhva's notion of upāsanā in Appendix 4.

93. In Madhva, upāsanā signifies the reverential approach of the soul to the Lord. The soul desires to honour and serve the Lord. But it wants to know the grandeur of the Lord. The soul first of all knows the Lord as the author of all, the author of one's body, the father of all. Out of this consciousness is born personal attachment and engagement. The soul asks itself: What should I do? The sacred texts answer; continuous upāsanā. (AV. III. 3.5 ss.)



study. Once the aspirant has heard from his guru the sacred texts (in exceptional cases one might read the texts by one self) and has understood the interpretations offered by the teacher, he must take the next step viz. 'manana'. 'Manana' includes the investigation of the content of the texts, their comparison and harmonization. At this stage there is also the effort to harmonize the whole sacred teaching. Thus 'manana' continues the process of *śravaṇa* by means of deep, concentrated reflection on the texts repeatedly heard and assimilated.<sup>94</sup> According to Jayatīrthā "manana" is another name for *jijñāsa* (desire to know).<sup>95</sup>

'Upāsana' in its ordinary sense means service or religious worship. It also has the meaning of religious reflection or meditation. In Mādhvism, 'Upāsana' can be of two types : the first type consists in the meditative study of the vedic texts.<sup>96</sup> Viṣṇu is the central theme of the entire sacred tradition and it is only through the study of the sacred texts one can reach the sure knowledge of the Lord. The second type of Upāsana is of the nature of *dhyāna* (meditation). This type of Upāsana begins only when the aspirant has acquired a sufficient and sure knowledge of Viṣṇu from the sacred texts.<sup>97</sup>

The different members of 'Yoga' do not constitute an independent method of spiritual realization. They form part of 'dhyāna-upāsana'. Madhva explains : Dhāraṇa

*kiṃ mayā kāryam ityeva syād buddhir adhikāriṇaḥ ... upāsanaṃ nityaṃ kartavyetyādareṇahi* (AV. III. 3.53).

94. AV. III. 3.78.

Madhva is convinced that one should constantly practice 'Śravaṇa and "manan" Śravaṇaṃ mananaṃ caiva kartavyaṃ sarvathaiva. (AV. III. 3.75)

95. NS. on III. 3.1

96. AV. III. 3.75 ff.

97. AV. III. 3.55

*Sopāsanaṃ ca dvividhā śāstrābhyāsa-svarūpiṇī, dhyānarūpā parā caiva tadāṅgam dhāraṇādikaṃ/*

(concentration) produces an intermittent presence of the object. Dhyāna implies the continuous presence of the object without any effort. Samādhi implies the constant presence of the object without any effort".<sup>98</sup> In fact yogic methods lead us only to "samādhi". But "dhyāna-upāsana" in Madhva stands for a spiritual attitude full of reverence, love and the desire for service. This type of superior 'upāsana, is to be practised constantly.

As 'ignorance' in the system of Madhva has a moral aspect, viz. the disposition of pride, so real knowledge, according to Madhva, has an element of humility: the recognition and conscious acceptance of Viṣṇu's independence and one's own utter dependence on him.

Constant 'hearing, reflection and meditation' should be practised till we become possessors of the immediate vision of Viṣṇu (aparokṣajñāna). These exercises must be constant for two reasons: 1) the ignorance which covers the souls and hinders it from seeing the salvific truths is deep rooted; 2) the Lord whose immediate vision we long for is the most unmanifest reality.<sup>98</sup> Though the immediate vision of Viṣṇu is the final fruit of our knowledge, still this fruit can be attained only through the favour of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu, the most unmanifest being can only be seen by him to whom Viṣṇu grants this favour.<sup>99</sup> He alone can remove ignorance and enable

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98. Tantrasārasamgrahah. 131 ff. gives in a clear way the teaching of Madhva on this point.

The form of Viṣṇu is unmanifest (avyakta) and hence invisible to us, unless Viṣṇu deigns to manifest himself to us, is an oft repeated teaching of Madhva. BSBh. III. 2.22, 23, 25 etc.

Tat. Dī. pp. avyakto'pi prakāśate prasannaḥ san.

99. BSBh. III. 2.22 paramātmāparokṣyam ca tat prasādād eva na jīvaśaktyā

Tat. Dī. p. 335 atha jīva jñānayogyo'pi śravaṇādīmān api na svaśaktyā bhagavantam paśyati, kiṁtu tat prasādā(d)....

us to see him. Therefore, Madhva can say without the least hesitation : "the immediate vision of Viṣṇu is obtained only through the favour of Viṣṇu and not through the power of the soul".<sup>100</sup>

In this context it may be instructive to mention a special view of Madhva. He says that the stain or blemish of evil actions do not touch in anyway those who have attained the correct and perfect vision. (*vikarmalepo naivāsti samyagdr̥ṣṭi-matām kvacit AV 111.4.4*) The gods inferior to Brahmā, do not lose the innate measure of knowledge and felicity they possess (according to their *yogyatā*). But grave sins can diminish their acquired qualities. (*ibid.* 5) The gods, Candrar and Sugrīva committed the crime of taking to themselves the wives of their superiors. They did not however, lose their innate knowledge, felicity and fitness for *mukti*. But their acquired qualities suffered a diminution. Evil actions done by human souls in the state of liberation produce a diminution of their bliss. There is really no stain or blemish on the soul. Such is the fruit of knowledge. (*ibid.* 7-8) 'The *'samyagjñānin'* or *'aparokṣajñānin'* of Madhvaism corresponds to the *'jīvanmukta'* of other Hindu schools. It is true that Madhva does not accept the doctrine of *jīvanmukti*. But something equivalent is to be found in his teaching. In Madhva even *'samyagjñāna'* does not immediately destroy *avidyā* or bondage. But the prospect of *mokṣa* seems to be assured. Only when the *'prārabdhakarmas'* are exhausted, release will be attained. But the Lord through his grace can destroy some portion of *'karma'*. (On *upamāda BSBh 111.4 51 & 16*) Another point that needs to be mentioned here is that souls even in the state of release can commit sins. But once they

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Viṣṇu is "*Vilakṣaṇarūpa*"; He is *'satyam, jñānam, anantam'*. Such a being is seen only through its own favour.

have reached the state of 'samyagjñāna' sin does not really affect their reality.

The immediate vision of Viṣṇu is not full liberation. By the fact that a chained prisnor obtains the favour of meeting the king, he does not thereby become fully free. He has the hope of obtaining his freedom. Only Viṣṇu can destroy the beginningless ignorance and deliver the jīva from its bondage to matter.<sup>101</sup> This signifies that the final saving knowledge is from Viṣṇu alone, even though the favour of Viṣṇu does not do away with our efforts. But the whole of knowledge forms a part of something else which is superior to it, viz., devotion.

In Dvaita Vedānta, the saving knowledge too is graded. It exists in vaying degrees in different types of beings. Only slowly knowledge becomes more precise and clear. The first stage of knowledge is that of reflection on the vedic texts. Through the study of the Vedas we get the knowledge of their supreme purport, Viṣṇu. But this is an indirect knowledge. (AV 111.3-75 ff) This is a way to the vision of the Lord. The yogins however, possess a higher stage of knowledge. Through penance they have purified themselves. They see God reflected in the mirror of their selves. We know that the finite spirit is a mediumless refelction of the Lord. In fact it is both the reflection and the mirror. What the Yogins really see is only the image of the Lord. He is different from all the products. (AV 111.4.86) The gods have an immediate vision or knowledge of the Lord. But this knowledge is not steady. (AV 111.4.78, 85-86) Before liberation, their qualities are not really complete. In fact only the liberated souls possess the full, steady and immediate knowledge or vision of God. At each successive stage of knowledge there is a greater degree of devotion. In liberation, devotion is no more a means. It is the goal itself; it is beatitude. (AV 111.4.234)

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101. AV. I. 1.41 and Jayatīrtha's comments.

### 3. The Way of Devotion (bhakti-mārga)

The way of knowledge and the way of devotion are inseparably bound together in the thought of Madhva.<sup>102</sup> We cannot separate one from the other, though we may legitimately ask the question whether the element of knowledge or the element of love holds primacy in 'bhakti'. At the root of one's devotion to Viṣṇu, there is the certain knowledge of the greatness of Viṣṇu. It must be noted here that in the descriptions of bhakti given by Madhva or quoted by him, sometimes the element of knowledge and sometimes the element of 'love-devotion' stands out as the principal element, though on the whole, love is more stressed than knowledge.

Let us try to analyse a few of the mādharma descriptions of bhakti. Madhva says : "Since knowledge is a part of bhakti (devotion), bhakti is called knowledge. Bhakti is said to be a type of knowledge".<sup>103</sup> Trivikrama says that 'bhakti is that knowledge which is accompanied by loving devotion'.<sup>104</sup> In these two descriptions of bhakti, knowledge is more stressed than love. But in the following description of bhakti taken from the Bhaviṣyat Purāṇa, love is said to be the principal element of bhakti. 'Bhakti is that firm and all surpassing love, which is preceded by (which springs from) the knowledge of the greatness of Viṣṇu'.<sup>105</sup> Here knowledge becomes a

102. In the following texts 'knowledge' and 'devotion' are put together :

BSBh. III. 2. 19; Mund. Up. Bh. I. 1.5; Pr. Dī. on Bh. Gī. on Bh. Gī. Bh. IX. 31;

Tat. Dī. p. 329; Mbh. Tātn. I. 86 etc.

103. AV.

jñānasya bhaktir jñānam itīryate  
jñānasyaiva viśeṣo yat bhaktir ity  
abhidhiyate.

Here, though the concept of 'bhakti' is more extensive, still it is the intensity of the gnostic element, which essentially constitutes real bhakti.

104. Tat. Dī. p. 328

105. BSBh. III. 2.19

snehasahitaṁ jñānaṁ bhaktiḥ  
māhātmyajñānapūrvas tu sadṛḍhaḥ  
sarvato' dhikaḥ sneho bhaktiḥ



prerequisite of firm love. Commenting on B.S.Bh. Trivikrama writes : "knowledge is a part (amśa) of bhakti".<sup>106</sup> And a little further, he writes that 'bhakti' is an attitude (bhāva) which is of the nature of love and great respect.<sup>107</sup> The respect of which Trivikrama here speaks may be best understood from Madhva's comments on I Mund. 1.5 : "He is the best devotee and Bhāgavata who considers Viṣṇu to be the supreme with none equal or superior to him".<sup>108</sup>

Jayatīrtha with his usual clarity brings out the relation between knowledge and devotion in his commentary on Bh. Gī. Bh. "Since there is an inseparable connection between devotion and knowledge, when one is absent, the other too is absent".<sup>109</sup> So both knowledge and devotion exist together and between them there exists a certain mutual dependence. Madhva is conscious of the interdependence of knowledge and bhakti. An incipient devotion or desire is needed in order to reach the knowledge of Viṣṇu, and the knowledge of Viṣṇu impels the soul to greater devotion. Finally liberation (or the state of release) itself is seen as bhakti.<sup>110</sup> The desire for Viṣṇu forms part of the jīva. This desire cannot be suppressed by the attainment of the objects of the lower desires. In this sense, bhakti remains even after the attainment of liberation. All desires are not suppressed in the

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106. Tat. Dī. p. 329 Jñāna is said to be an amśa of bhakti.
107. ibid. Snehabahumānātmako bhāvaḥ bhaktiḥ
108. I Muṇḍ Up Bh. 1.5
109. Pr. Dī. on IX 31 bhaktijñānayor avinābhūtatvāt ca tadabhāve tadabhāvasiddhiḥ
110. AV. III. 4. 233 bhaktyā jñānam, tato bhaktiḥ, tato dṛṣṭiḥ, tataś ca sā, tata muktiḥ, tato bhaktiḥ, saiva syāt suharūpiṇī.

state of final release. The peace of liberation consists in the fact that the jīva is fully fixed in the Lord.<sup>111</sup>

In his commentary on the Br. Ā. Up., Madhva has a few revealing lines which we must briefly analyse here. Madhva writes : 'Viṣṇu is dearer (to the Bhakta) than a son, wealth or one's own self. One's love for one's own self is from the Lord'.<sup>112</sup> This statement is proved by the datum of experience that a man often acts against his own good. Madhva continues : It is in the love of Viṣṇu everything else becomes dear to (us)'.<sup>113</sup> Why is Viṣṇu so dear to us that only in the love of Viṣṇu does everything else become lovable ? Viṣṇu's absolute perfection is the answer. Since he is the most perfect of all beings, he is dearer to us than all the other beings. It is foolish to think of one's petty self or anything else as dearer than Viṣṇu, says Madhva.<sup>114</sup> In this short passage

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111. Gī. T. N. II. 70      kāmo mokṣavirodhi syānna sarve-  
cchāvirodhinīti ca na ca sarvecchā-  
bhāve jīvanam bhavati/sāntir mokṣo  
yato hyatra viṣṇuniṣṭhā bhaved  
dhruveti ca
112. Br. Up. Bh. I. 4,8      The text commented upon is :  
"tadetat preyah, putrāt preyo,  
vittat preyo....ātmano'pi priyatvam  
tu tenaiva kṛtam anjasā
113. *ibid.*      yato'tah svātmanaś cāpi svāpriya-  
tvam udāhrtam asminpriye priyam  
sarvam, tasmād ekaḥ priyo Hariḥ
114. Br. Ā. Up. Bh. I. 4.9. Also *ibid.* I. 4.7 speaks of the  
absolute perfection of Viṣṇu.

Bhakti is a steady and continuous flow of love of God, which is not obstructed by any number of hinderances. This love for God transcends our love for ourselves, for our kith and kin and for our possessions. This love is based on the all surpassing majesty of God for he is the abode of all perfection.

Māhātmyajñāna pūrvastu suddhīdhaḥ  
sarvato'dhikāḥ sneho bhaktiriti  
proktaḥ tayā muktir na cānyathā  
(Mbh. T. N. I. 86)

the devotee's love for Viṣṇu is made to rest on Viṣṇu's absolute perfection. Viṣṇu is lovable and loved for his own sake and not for what he does for the soul.

The power of bhakti is so great 'that the devotees are in Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu in them.'<sup>115</sup> The devotees are under the full control of the Lord and the Lord in his turn is under the control of the devotees.<sup>116</sup> Jayatīrtha commenting on these lines puts the question : Are not all beings (here all souls) under the sway of Viṣṇu; all dependent on Viṣṇu ?<sup>117</sup> What then is the meaning of the statement that the devotees are under the control of Viṣṇu ? Madhva and Jayatīrtha tell us that the devotee is conscious of his dependence on Viṣṇu, whereas the non-devotee is not conscious of his dependence.<sup>118</sup> Once again devotion is here seen as the conscious and willing acceptance of the 'ontological' dependence of the soul on Viṣṇu. Neither Madhva nor Jayatīrtha tells us how Viṣṇu is under the 'control' of the devotee. In what way Viṣṇu allows himself to be conducted by the devotee remains unexplained.

Madhva admits different types and grades of bhakti. First of all, bhakti differs from one class of souls to another. The gods for example must be devoted to Viṣṇu by means of

Madhva does not accept "dveṣa-bhakti" as salvific. Persons like Śiṣupāla were real bhaktas. But the power of a curse turned them into haters of God. Once released from that evil power, they got the reward of their devotion.

115. Is. Up Bh. 5

Bh. Gī. IX. 29

116. Bh Gī Bh. IX. 29

117. Pr. Dī. on Bh Gī  
Bh. IX. 29

118. Bh Gī Bh. IX. 29

'Sarvagam paramātmānam sarvam  
ca paramātmānam

Ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi  
te teṣu cāpy aham

mama te vaśāḥ teṣām ahaṁ vaśa....

'buddhipūrvābuddhipūrvakatvena  
bhedah'

'love' (sneha); the Apsaras should manifest their devotion to Viṣṇu through the attitude of 'a woman in love with her husband' (kāmitvena).<sup>119</sup> Bhakti can take different shapes in the soul : the humble attitude of a servant to his Lord, of a son to his father, of a disciple to his teacher.<sup>120</sup> Apart from the statement that Apasaras should show their devotion to Viṣṇu through their attitude of feminine love, we do not find any erotic fervour in Madhva's idea of man's devotion to Viṣṇu. From the point of view of the intensity of devotion Madhva distinguishes between the higher, middle and lower types of bhaktas (uttama, madhyama and adhama).<sup>121</sup>

Devotion is directed not only to Viṣṇu but also to other superior beings like Laksmī, Brahmā and Vāyu.<sup>122</sup> Such bhakti is salvific when practised in the right way. Viṣṇu alone is the absolute being and absolute devotion can be practised only towards him. Devotion to Vāyu is specially recommended because Madhva considers god Vāyu as a sort of 'mediator' who leads the souls to Viṣṇu.<sup>123</sup>

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119. For texts-Vide B.N.K. Sharma op. cit. pp. 292-293
120. *ibid.*
121. BSBh. IV. 3.16 These different types and grades of bhakti depend upon the intrinsic 'adhikārtiva' of the souls.
122. A. V. III. 3.102 f. see also B. N. K. Sharma Op. Cit. p. 296. Devotion to Viṣṇu is called Parābhakti. Devotion to Rāmā etc. should be practised in a graded manner by one desirous of obtaining his final end. AV. III. 4. 245 f. Equals who are good are to be loved as one loves oneself and mercy is to be shown to others. (AV. III. 3.105)
123. BSBh. IV. 3.12 Br. In spite of this mediating function, the texts I have studied do not in any way permit one to equate Vāyu with Christ or the Holy Spirit. Mr. Vāsu in his translation of Madhva's Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyās has rendered the
- Ā Up. Bh. III. 59

According to Madhva, bhakti is both the means to liberation and the very goal. Bhakti leads us on the path of knowledge and obtains for us Viṣṇu's grace. But it is also the end or goal. Even the liberated jīva, is filled with bhakti. He grows in bhakti. It's very essence is felicity. Now bhakti is no more a means.<sup>124</sup> Thus the incipient desire for Viṣṇu which is in the jīva, is awakened and made to grow by means of vedic study and meditation. It blossoms into bhakti. This bhakti is a continuous current of love, surpassing all our desires, and possessing the power to overcome all obstacles. It finally reaches the bliss of union with Viṣṇu.

word 'Vāyu' into English with such expressions as 'Christ the Son of God Mediator, First-born etc.' Bishop Kulandram (Grace in Christianity and Hinduism, p. 178, p. 214) and Prof. Zachner (Hinduism, p. 101) have fallen victims to the theosophizing tendencies of Mr. Vāsu and other modern interpreters of Madhva. In the system of Mādhva, Vāyu is not equal to Viṣṇu; he does not seem to lead all souls to Viṣṇu; he has very little in common with Christ or the Holy Spirit.

124. Gī. T. N. Introduction : Viṣṇubhakter eva sarvasādhānottamattvam. Bhakti is a more elevated means than direct and indirect knowledge. Propitiated by bhakti, he grants the soul a steady knowledge and a greater bhakti.  
mukto'pi tadvaśo nityaṁ bhūyo bhakti-samanvitaḥ, sādhyāndasvarūpaiva bhaktir naivātra sāadhanam. (ibid.) Cf. also "anuvartate ca sā bhaktir muktāvānandarūpiṇī. (AV. III. 3.211)

Harerupāsānā Cātra Sadaiva Sukharūpiṇī  
Na tu Sāadhanabhūta Sā seddherevātra sā yatah  
(BSBh. IV. 4.21)



But neither the true knowledge of Viṣṇu nor real bhakti towards him is possible without the elective of favour of Viṣṇu.<sup>125</sup>

Up to now we have only explained the nature and necessity of 'bhakti' to the Lord. But in the pluralistic, ontological theology of Madhva, there is also the need of a respect or love towards oneself. Madhva terms it 'svādara' : self respect or legitimate desire for one's own good. If a person does not desire his own good, then there will be no desire for 'mukti' too in him (AVIII 3. 103)

Salvific 'bahkti' includes also the devotion that one should have to superior beings. Madhva repeats that a graded devotion to the gods is necessary for liberation. This is nothing but the conscious acceptance of the true nature of reality. It is also prescribed by the Vedas (AV 111.4.242ff) One's respect for oneself and the devotion one has for the gods, must find their fulfilment in one's highest devotion to the Lord. The progress towards liberation is a step by step ascent to Viṣṇu through the various grades of beings. 'Bhakti' is the force that sustains the movement. Moreover, the realisation of the various grades of beings, especially of the gods, offers us the awareness of the utter greatness and distance of the Lord from all other beings.

#### 4. The Favour of Viṣṇu (prāsada)

The means of release which we have described up to now : the way of action, the way of knowledge and the way of bhakti, are intended to move Viṣṇu to show us his favour. His favour or grace alone can ultimately grant us what we are searching for. The very discovery of one's own self in all its depth and purity depends on the favour of Viṣṇu.

125. BSBh. 2.22

AV. I. 1.12

ibid. I. 1.15

vr̥nute yam tena labhyah (Kāth  
Up. II. 22)

ajñānām jñānado Viṣṇur jñāninām  
mokṣadaś ca....

Madhva ceaselessly repeats that 'release' is obtained only through the favour of Viṣṇu.<sup>126</sup> Jayatīrtha's comments on the same passage contain the affirmation that without the favour of Viṣṇu no release is possible.<sup>127</sup> A. V. verse 93 tells us that liberation is obtained through the 'good will' of Viṣṇu.<sup>128</sup> In all the works of Madhva and in the commentaries of Trivikrama and Jayatīrtha we find innumerable statements to the effect that without the favour or grace (prasāda, prīti) of Viṣṇu or without the choice of God, none can attain release, the highest end of the soul. <sup>129</sup>

The word most commonly used by Madhva to express the idea of the favour or grace of Viṣṇu, is "prasāda," though other words like "prīti" and "anugraha" occur in his writings. But the word prasāda is by no means reserved to express the idea of divine favour. Madhva speak of the earth 'favoured' by rain (prasādita);<sup>130</sup> he insists on the need of the prasāda or anugraha of the teacher in order to reach the saving knowledge of truth.<sup>131</sup> The same word is used to express the idea of favour shown by kings and other great

126. Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 23-25 sa ca (mokṣaḥ) viṣṇuprasādād eva siddhyati

(They are many other citations to this effect in the same section)

127. Pr. Dī. On Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 23-25

mokṣasya bhagavatprasādasādhyatvam anyasādhyatvābhāvaś ca

128. AV. I. 1.93

The Vedas teach 'saguṇabrahman and mokṣa' which are obtained by the 'prīti' (good will, favour) of Brahman.

129. For texts: Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 23-25; Pr. on these Mādhva texts.

Kath. Up. Bh. pp. 19-20; AV. II, 15; BSBh. III. 2. 22, 27, 37, etc.

130. BSBh. II. 2.4

Here, the anugraha or prasāda of the rain-god (pārjanya) is meant.

131. ibid. III, 3. 44-46

men to those who acknowledge humbly their greatness.<sup>132</sup> From the use of the word itself by Madhva, we cannot get any clear idea of the reality or the nature of the saving favour of Viṣṇu. Again it must be said that apart from the general affirmation that without the favour of Viṣṇu, release is impossible, Madhva has not given us any real theology of grace.

But if we compare the various texts on prasāda and evaluate them in the general context of the mādharma system, we seem to reach the following conclusion. Prasāda or prīti is the benevolent disposition of a higher person towards a lower person, because the lower person humbly acknowledges the superiority of the higher. This benevolent attitude produces in the lower person a real result. Since the prasāda of Viṣṇu is the ultimate cause of liberation, i. e., of the removal of the positive ignorance which veils the soul, and of the soul's connection with matter, we can say without any hesitation that the favour of God is a positive entity. Release which is caused by grace is real. So the cause which effects it, must also be real. The reality of grace forms part of the general mādharma realism.

Madhva's explanation of bhakti and prasāda seems to indicate that our acknowledgement of Viṣṇu's superiority is the cause, that moves Viṣṇu to grant us his favour. But in the Kath. Up. Bh. Madhva states that only through the favour of Viṣṇu can one know his superiority. On the other hand only he who knows Viṣṇu's superiority can receive his favour. Madhva thus seems to be at pains to express the interrelation between 'grace and work'.

##### **5. The Function of the Saving Favour of Viṣṇu**

Darkness is removed by light; in the same manner ignorance is removed by knowledge. So why should one bring in a new element into the process of release. Such is the objection

132. Bh, Gī. Bh. II. 23-25.

of the Advaitin against the mādḥva view of divine favour. According to the Advaitin the cause of our release is the immediate knowledge of Truth.<sup>133</sup>

Madḥva's arguments against this monistic position are by now well known to us. Since the beginningless bondage is caused by Viṣṇu, he alone can remove the bondage and give to the soul final release. Sacred texts like "By him, whom Viṣṇu chooses, the Supreme Being is attained",<sup>134</sup> clearly teach us that Viṣṇu alone is the ultimate cause of the soul's release from bondage and misery. Release consists in the immediate knowledge of Viṣṇu (brahmasākṣātkāra). Who can reach this immediate knowledge of the invisible Viṣṇu, if Viṣṇu himself does not grant it to him? Finally, Madḥva thinks that the monistic objection is based on a false theory of knowledge. Knowledge as such does not destroy a positive entity like ignorance with which Viṣṇu has enveloped us. Knowledge means the cognition of an existing object and not the destruction of the object of knowledge.<sup>135</sup> This means

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(133) The Advaita view of the cause of release is very complex. Śaṅkara for example says that 'mokṣa is effected by the 'knowledge which is caused (vijñānena hetukena) by his grace (tadanugraha)

(ŚBSBh. II. 3.41). In his Bh. Gī. Bh. 2, 29, Śaṅkara says that release is to be attained by means of knowledge which is caused by Īśvara-prasāda. But the idea of grace introduces 'dualism' into reality and thought, and hence Śaṅkara admits in truth only one means of release: the immediate experience of identity) (Vide : ŚBSBh. IV. 2.13; IV. 1.13; I. 1.4 etc.)

(134) Kath Up. II. 22

The invisible Viṣṇu becomes visible to us only if he manifests himself to us. BSBh. II. 3.49.

(135) S. Siauve, 'La Voie la Connaissance....; p. 48 ff.

that true knowledge cannot release the soul from positive ignorance.

Man's deliverance from bondage by Viṣṇu is compared to the freeing of a prisoner by a king. "As a king, being pleased at the sight of a prisoner, frees him from his bonds, so the Lord when seen, cuts the bonds of the soul asunder."<sup>136</sup> The king sends the man to prison and so he alone can free him from it. Of course, there is an essential difference between the chains of a prisoner and the bonds of a transmigrating soul; the first has a beginning, the second has no beginning. So the bondage of the soul can be destroyed only by Viṣṇu, because he alone is omnipotent.<sup>137</sup>

In bondage itself we have to distinguish between two causalities; there is the secondary causality of positive ignorance and of the union of soul and matter; then there is the primary causality of Viṣṇu, who is really the principal cause of the veiling of the soul. This means that the Lord may remove the secondary cause of bondage viz., positive ignorance and yet the soul may remain without the possession of the totality of bliss because the Lord has not taken away his immediate binding action from the soul.<sup>138</sup> According to Jayatīrtha nothing material and unconscious like "karma" or ignorance can stand in the way of the action of God.<sup>139</sup> This

136. AV. I. 1.41, 42

137. NS. texts quoted by S. S. Siauue, Op. Cit. p. 50

138 NS.

paramēśvaraśaktir eva j.vasvarūpā-  
varaṇaṃ mukhyam avidyā tu nimit-  
tamātram (S. Siauue, Op. Cit.  
p. 52)

tato 'vidyāyām nivṛttāyām api  
nāśeṣānandābhivyaktir yāvad Iśvara  
eva svakīyam bandhakaśaktiṃ na  
tato vyāvartayati (ibid)

139. NS.

acetanānām karmāṇām svatantra-  
bhagavatprasādapratibandhakatvā-  
yogāt (ibid. p. 51)



way of looking at bondage helps Madhva to explain how a man, though still in his body can be released from the bondage of positive ignorance and yet not be the possessor of full bliss (jīvanmukti),<sup>140</sup>

In other words, Madhva admits moments in the functioning of the saving favour of Viṣṇu. There is first of all the saving action of Viṣṇu by which knowledge is granted to the ignorant; secondly Viṣṇu gives liberation from ignorance to the knowers of Viṣṇu and finally he grants bliss to the liberated souls. This makes it clear that a man may be liberated from ignorance and yet remain without the final bliss. As Viṣṇu relaxes more or less his immediate binding action on the soul, there is more or less bliss in the soul.<sup>141</sup> So the divine activity of liberating the jīva is essentially an action by which the soul is united to the source of all felicity. The soul had in the past never enjoyed such a relationship. This relationship is something effected by grace. Under the influence of the liberating grace of Viṣṇu the souls fit for liberation receive from him the actualization of their capacity (yogyatā) for bliss.

#### **D. The Status of the Released Souls**

We have already described in some detail the nature of release, its source and the way to attain it. Let us try now to examine a little more closely the condition of the released soul.

140. On the doctrine of 'Jīvanmukti' in Madhva—Conf. BSBh. IV. 1.13 ff; Von Glasenapp, Op. Cit. p. 99 f.

141. NS. 1. 1.15.

The power of the Lord is the principal means for the veiling of the real and proper form of the jīva. Avidyā is only the instrumental cause. So when avidyā is removed, there does not immediately appear total felicity. The Lord's power of binding the soul still remains.

“ata evānandahrāsavṛddhī vakṣyate.

The first point, which Madhva insists on in this connection is the distinction of the released soul from Viṣṇu. Release is not the attainment of the soul's identity with Viṣṇu ; it is only the highest similarity and union with Viṣṇu.<sup>142</sup> Even in the released state, Viṣṇu is the support of the souls; there is no identity of nature with him. Just as pure water poured into pure water acquires community of likeness (*tādṛg eve bhavati*), even so the man of wisdom shakes off merits and demerits and as a pure soul attains highest similarity with (Viṣṇu).<sup>143</sup> In release the mind will be in tune with Brahman's mind.<sup>144</sup>

In Madhva's opinion the whole of the Kath. Up. teaches this one doctrine, viz., the distinction of the released soul from Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu alone remains the absolutely independent Being while the soul, even the released soul, is dependent on him. Viṣṇu is superior to and the overlord of the released soul.<sup>145</sup> These facts show that the distinction between the souls and the Absolute Being is not bridged even by release.

Real identity of the released with Brahman would imply the destruction of the consciousness of the soul. But in the first place, the sacred texts such as : "The self is imperishable and his attributes are inextinguishable", teach us that the souls and its attributes are indestructible.<sup>146</sup> Secondly, the

142. VTV. no. 281  
ibid.

paramaṁ sāmīyam upaiti  
na svarūpaikatā tasya, muktasyāpi  
virūpataḥ

143. ibid. no. 281

BSBh. II. 1.14; Tat. Dī. p. 172

Trivikrama clearly rejects 'svarūpaikya' of the released soul with Viṣṇu

144. VTV. nos. 293; 294 brahmatatyanukūla me matir  
muktau bhaviṣyati

ibid. 297-302; 308 etc.

145. BSBh. II. 1.14; II. 3.28

146. Br. Ā Up. IV. 5.14

destruction of consciousness is by no means desirable'. In the state of release, Viṣṇu necessarily is to be known : but if the released have no consciousness how can they know Viṣṇu ? In the greatest good of man, i. e. in release, the absence of knowledge is unthinkable. Release is by definition the state of bliss and if one has no consciousness, can there be the pleasure arising out of seeing, smelling etc. ?<sup>147</sup>

Let us look at the same point from the angle of the object. Identity of the released with Viṣṇu, would mean that there would be a subject of knowledge without an object of knowledge.<sup>148</sup> But according to the general principle of Madhva, knowledge is impossible when we have no object of knowledge. When knowledge is absent, there is only emptiness ! Thus release would become nothing but emptiness. Thus the Viṣṇu-Soul identity implies on the one hand the destruction of the individual personality of the soul, and thus the abrogation of the very purpose of release; and on the other hand, the destruction of the 'object', viz., Viṣṇu, and thus the emptying out of the very content of release.<sup>149</sup>

Another interesting point which we wish to discuss briefly, is whether the released souls possess bodies or not. The problem is discussed by Madhva in his commentary on the 4th

147. Br, Ā Up. Bh. I. 4.10

BSBh. IV. 4.1 ff. discusses the problem of the 'nature of 'mukti'. Release is enjoyment. Madhva takes it for granted that this enjoyment is a conscious and felt experience.

148. BSBh. IV. 4.4, 5, etc. teach that Viṣṇu is the object and the giver of all enjoyments.

Mukti is 'Nārāyaṇaprāpti' (Tat. Dī. p. 292). It is 'paramānanda' (VTV. Ti. p. 343)

149. When there is no 'Jñeya' (object of knowledge) there is no knowledge; there is only 'void' (Śūnyatā) but mukti is no void. (BSBh. IV. 4.1)

“pāda” of the 4th chap. of the B. S. In the Hindu tradition, there were different views on this matter,

An opinion attributed to Jaimini says that the released souls enjoy their blessing through the Absolute Being. “The released having abandoned this body and having reached Brahman, through Brahman hears and through him enjoys all this.”<sup>150</sup> Brahman is the medium through which the released know and enjoy. As an unknown text says, the released take (everything) with the hand of Viṣṇu, see through the eyes of Hari, walk with the feet of Hari and this is the state of the released.<sup>151</sup>

But the sages Auḍulomi and Bādiri think that the released souls, though completely freed from all gross material bodies, possess nevertheless bodies consisting of pure matter. This means that the released souls see, hear and enjoy with the help of their own pure bodies, though Bādarāyaṇa, according to Madhva, would add that they do all these activities assisted by the members of Viṣṇu's body.<sup>152</sup>

There is a third view which is again attributed to Jaimini and which says that the released souls at their own will take on bodies consisting of pure matter (suddha sattva) which would further their bliss.

Madhva is of the opinion that the released souls, possessing head, body hands and feet formed out of knowledge and felicity, freed from all defects, have no other activity except play. Because the released possess pure spiritual faculties, they can know the pure form of Viṣṇu (spiritual body) which also is formed out of pure knowledge and felicity.<sup>153</sup>

What are the activities of the released souls? Apart from those activities which keep them in their blessed state they

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150. BSBh. IV. 4.5

151. *ibid.* IV. 4.5

152. *ibid.* IV. 4.6, 7, 9, 10

153. Br. A. U, Bh. III 5.4

are not obliged to perform any actions.<sup>154</sup> The bliss of the released is uniform and unchanging. Still the Mādhvas, as attested by the Madhvasiddhāntasāra, enumerate eleven activities in which the released souls engage themselves. 'Some enjoy the company of women, others ride in chariots or on horses and elephants, others praise the Lord by the utterance of Vedic mantras, still others dance or play on musical instruments etc.'<sup>155</sup> But whatever these souls do, they do it in order to keep themselves in their state of bliss. One thing to be remembered here is that these souls have no prescribed duties. For example, they are not bound to meditate on Viṣṇu; but they are free to meditate on him. Injunctions and prohibitions which are all means to the attainment of release have no longer any binding force. They enter upon other activities too according to their pleasure, since the performance of actions does not bring about bondage nor their avoidance cause any evil consequence.<sup>156</sup> What Madhva wants to insist upon in this context is that the released are no more bound by external laws. Only the law of their inner bliss regulates and rules their actions. Release is not a passive or inactive state, The released souls are active and free. They are not without desires; but their desires are pure and are immediately realised because they are fully in accord with the desire of Viṣṇu.

Madhva admits a gradation in the bliss (ānandatāratamya) and status of the released. This opinion is a direct consequence of the mādhva idea of the difference in nature-fitness (svarūpa योग्यता) of each individual soul. As we have often

154. Br. Ā U. Bh. III. 5.4 Sarvadoṣavinirmuktā muktāh kriḍanti nityaśah. BSBh. III. 3.30. This text insists on the fact that the released souls are once for all beyond the reach of knowledge. So they are free to act or not to act. Ibid. IV. 4.21. They always contemplate Viṣṇu. Their bliss is uniform (BS Bh. IV. 4. 21-22).

155. BNK Sharma Op. Cit. p. 441 ff.

156. BSBh. III. 3. 27-29. Mokṣe tu upāsana svecchayā, kriyate na kartavyatvāt.



said in the previous sections, Madhva admits not only different classes of souls but also some sort of a distinction in 'nature' between souls of the same class. Since these natures and these differences are without beginning and without end, the individual differences must remain even after release. A second argument (ultimately a corollary of the first) to prove the same point, is that between the means used and the result attained there must be a proportion. The means used by the gods etc. for the attainment of release cannot be compared with the means used by us. If we do not accept gradation in Mokṣa we should be guilty of attributing something to some one who does not deserve it. and denying to some one something which is really due to him.<sup>157</sup> In the hierarchy of released souls, god Brahmā occupies the first place. In fact he is the highest among the 'mukti yogya' souls. Because of these reasons Madhva thinks that there is a gradation in the bliss of the released souls.

Another way of expressing the idea of gradation among the released souls is taken by Madhva from the Vaiṣṇava doctrine of four grades in release. The released souls are ranked in an ascending order in as much as they are in Viṣṇu's world (sālokya), or close to Viṣṇu (sāmīpya), or similar to him (sārūpya), or united to him (sāyūjya).<sup>158</sup> Neither Madhva nor his two commentators have given us an elaborate explanation of these terms. In "sālokya-mukti", the released souls are admitted into the world of Viṣṇu, viz. Vaikuṇṭha. In the next stage, they remain in his proximity and presence.

157. Madhva enumerates the efforts put forth by the various gods to reach release.

Yuktam ca sādhanādhikīyāt  
Sādhyādhikyam surādiṣu  
nādhikyam yadi sādhye syāt  
prayatnaḥ sādhanē kutah

The efforts of each soul is in proportion of its Svarūpa.

158. BSBh. IV. 4.19. The lesser or greater intensity of knowledge is given as the cause of these difference (jñānādhikyāt).

At this stage the released are the servants of the Lord.<sup>159</sup> In “sārūpya-mukti” the desire of the souls to be assimilated to Viṣṇu is realized because of the gift of a body similar to that of the Lord. In this resemblance, the released experience a special felicity.<sup>160</sup> In sâyūjya-mukti the released penetrate into the body of Viṣṇu.<sup>161</sup> Their special felicity consists in this close union and in the fact that they now know by means of the very divine faculties.<sup>162</sup> At this stage the released are united to the body of Viṣṇu. Their felicity is not material or purely selfish.

The Mādhvas are quite conscious of the objection that inequality among the released souls would inevitably lead them to jealousy and strife. But since the released state is a state of unalloyed bliss, there should be no room there for dissatisfaction, discontentment and rivalry.<sup>163</sup> Each liberated soul sees Viṣṇu. Each feels that the Lord “is turned towards me”, just as each one has the impression that the Sun is looking at him.<sup>164</sup>

159. Br. Ā U. Bh. III. 5.4. Viṣṇor dāsatayā viṣṇoḥsāmīpyam mokṣa ucyate

160. Pr U Bh. VI. 4. Bhagavataḥ śarīravat sādṛśyayukte jive sukhaṁ bhavati.

161. Br Ā U. Bh. VI. 1.2. Praviśya deham yo bhogaḥ svarūpavyatirekataḥ sâyūjyam iti tam prāhuḥ.

162. Ibid.

163. Br Ā Up. Bh. III. 5.4. na kadācid viyogaśca na vidveśo na vāratih, modante sahitāḥ sarve sadā viṣṇuparāyaṇāḥ iti paingīśrutih.

Cf also AV III. 3.188 Sq. Here Madhva says that the released souls are without defects, and the inferior souls are the reflections of the superiors. All the qualities and activities of the inferiors are regulated and ruled by the favour of superior souls (of those who precede them). The ‘inferior souls’ are like good disciples so no envy etc

164. Ch Up Bh. II. 9 Sarveṣāṁ mām pratiṭyeva dṛṣṭisāmyacca sāma sah, dṛṣṭisāmyam maṇḍalasya viṣṇus tasya ca kāraṇam

Jayatīrtha tells us that mutual rivalry is caused by inordinate desire (kāma), jealousy and the attitude of unhelpfulness. Now the released souls, since they know Viṣṇu, i. e. since they know Viṣṇu directly, have no defects, no faults and they help each other. This statement is intended to show that the very foundation for rivalry and discontentment, viz. internal defects, is absent in the released. Though there is a gradation among the souls in bliss still in the absence of defects they are all equal. All the released are 'equally without defects'. Between a teacher and a pupil there is surely a big difference. But this difference does not in any way cause any rivalry or discontentment in the pupil because the causes of such rivalry and discontent are absent in the student. Moreover, the higher and superior souls have been of help to the lower and inferior souls in the attainment of bliss.<sup>165</sup>

The devotion and love which the liberated jīvas feel towards Viṣṇu, affect also their attitude to other liberated souls. The hierarchic order of the liberated jīvas reflect the perfections of Viṣṇu. The inferior jīvas are reflections of Viṣṇu and of the superior souls. The lower grades of jīvas are also directed by the higher souls. Moreover the vision of Viṣṇu fills each soul with bliss according to its capacity and fitness.<sup>166</sup>

Thus the released souls remain in unchanging bliss united to Viṣṇu and in harmony with the other liberated jīvas for all eternity.

165. Br Ā Up Bh. III. 5.4; AV III. 3.188 ss. AV III. 4.97 ss. The direct vision of Viṣṇu is produced only in those souls whose defects have been deleted through repeated rebirth. Defects like hatred and envy cannot reappear in the state of mukti.

166. Br Ā Up. Bh. III. 5.4. Tattadyogyatayā pūrtau viṣṇor dṛṣṭiḥ prajāyate. Just as a pot, a river and an ocean can be filled with water so according to each one's capacity, plenitude is possible for the small as well as the great. All from human souls up to Brahmā can reach fullness because of the means like bhakti granted to them from beginningless times.

## CONCLUSION

At the end of this textual and systematic exposition of the mādхва conception of the Absolute Being, it may not be out of place to give a tentative and provisional analysis of the concepts Madhva used to express his (type of) theism. Madhva, like all thinkers is indebted to the traditional concepts and thought patterns, which he inherited from his predecessors. But often he transforms them with the help of his own personal insights.

### (1) Main Concepts :

We have already mentioned that Madhva's cosmology is expressed with the help of the sāṃkhya concept of prakṛti (primary matter) and its evolutes. But the Sāṃkhya which influenced Madhva is not the classical system of Īśvarakraśṇa, but the Sāṃkhya expounded in the Bh. Gīta, the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. Madhva does not accept that Prakṛti and Puruṣa could be the sufficient explanation of the origin and evolution of the universe. Nor is he ready to accept the theory that spirits are essentially inactive. 'Prakṛti' and 'puruṣa' (spirit) possess opposing attributes. Still both are related to the Lord. 'Prakṛti' stands for the unconscious, non-transparent matter. 'Cetana prakṛti' is Lakṣmi, the consort of Viṣṇu who is also called 'Śakti'. But she is not identical with the Lord, but dependent on him. Then there is the divine 'Śakti', which is identical with the Lord and is the creative power of the Lord. Madhv's insight into the independence of the Lord and the dependence of all other realities on him enables him to transform and unify the Sāṃkhya concepts. His specific notion of the hierarchy of beings, brings order and harmony into the multiplicity of spiritual and material beings. Bhāgavata Purāṇa II. 10.12 gives him the textual basis to interpret anew the old concepts and make them vehicles of his thought.

As we have seen in the first chapter, in Davita Vedānta all existents are endowed with innumerable qualities or attributes. Viṣṇu too possesses attributes. Now we would call such an entity "substance". Madhva, however, does not apply to Viṣṇu the Indian equivalent of the term substance, 'dravya'. He places God under the category of 'tattva' (reality) though he alone is the infinite and independent 'tattva'. Later thinkers of his school stated explicitly what the Master's doctrine implied, namely that Viṣṇu was a 'dravya' (substance) Viṣṇu is distinguished from other realities by the fact that he alone is independent and is devoid of all defects and is endowed with infinite perfections.

This way of describing the inner nature of the Supreme Being exhibits some similarity to the conceptual system of the Naiyāyika, Uddyotakāra. He, arguing with the help of the nyāya concept of 'dravya' and 'guṇa' reached the conclusion that Īśvara should not be conceived as a mere Jīva (soul), as had been done by the Naiyāyikas before him. Īśvara is to be placed in the category of 'dravya', for substance is that which possesses attributes and Īśvara too possesses them. But Īśvara, in as much as he possesses attributes not possessed by the Jīvas and other substances, is a different type of 'dravya'. So Uddyotakāra added one more substance to the already accepted ones, namely Īśvara. God is a substance 'sui generis'. Still God, in as much as he is a substance, is similar to other substances. The transcendence of Īśvara is expressed by removing him from the common category of 'Jīva dravyas' and by placing him as a special substance. Moreover, the affirmation that he alone possesses certain 'guṇas' like, omniscience and that he alone is endowed with infinite perfections, distinguishes him from all other realities.

Madhva's way of expressing Viṣṇu's transcendence and nature is not exactly the same as that of Uddyotakāra. He emphasizes that the attribute independence sets Viṣṇu apart from all other realities. For Madhva, Viśeṣa is an aspect of the



substantial reality. It is not something added to reality from outside. Viṣṇu's independence is his own supreme reality.

But the inner structure of all substantial realities is conceived in the same manner. This certainly makes the philosophical expression of the transcendence of Īśvara difficult. Still, Madhva is constantly at pains to express his religious insight into the total otherness of Viṣṇu. But the categories of 'tattva', 'viśeṣa', 'guṇa' and even pūrṇatva cannot do full justice to the insight of the Ācārya.

There is another point on which the Nyāya Vaiśeṣikas and the Dvaitins to some extent agree. For these schools, the Supreme Being is only the efficient cause of the world. Nyāya however, connects Īśvara's efficient causality to the atomistic cosmology of the Vaiśeṣikas, Madhva on the other hand joins the causality of Viṣṇu to seśvara Sāṃkhya cosmology. In the older Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, Īśvara's causality is thought of superficially, and mechanistically. Problems like his sway over the eternal atoms and souls, time and 'karma' had not been posed by the Vaiśeṣikas. Madhva's criticism of the vaiśeṣika view of the origin of the world shows that he has conceived Viṣṇu's causality in greater depth. It may not be false to say that in Dvaita Vedānta, Viṣṇu's efficient activity lies between the older Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika idea of mechanical causality and the Christian scholastic conception of creation out of nothing.

In the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika schools, Īśvara's activity is explained by means of the concept of attribute. In Yoga, however, God's activity is transferred to the material pendant (sāttvic body) he possesses. According to the Yogins, Īśvara is in himself inactive. In fact according to Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy, 'puruṣa' is essentially inactive. Only 'prakṛiti' is in itself active. So Īśvara's knowledge, activity and relation to the world are understood and expressed with the help of the concept of matter (body).

Madhva's position on this point is quite personal. For him spiritual beings are active. But still he believes that body is necessary for all activity. Viṣṇu, though the infinite spirit, has a body. Viṣṇu's relation to the world is explained with the help of the concept of body. But his body is not material, even of the sāttvic kind as the yogins assumed. Viṣṇu's body consists of his infinite qualities. This "attribute-body of the Lord" is the instrument of his activity. Viṣṇu's attributes are but aspects of his essential nature. His activity too forms an aspect of his nature. Ofcourse, the Brahman-Ātman theology of the Upaniṣads and the theological concepts found in the vaiṣṇava tradition have furnished Dvaita vedānta with other concepts- The upaniṣadic view that Brahman is sat, cit, ānanda, that the Supreme Being is the coincidence of opposites, that he can be known only through his own favour are found in Madhva. So also the vaiṣṇava Bhakti schools have offered Madhva many ideas and concepts to express the reality of jiva-Īśvara relationship. These points have been in one way or another mentioned in the body of the book.<sup>1</sup>

## (2) Madhva's Pattern of Thinking :

A system of thought contains not only doctrines or an expressed view of the universe, but above all a 'principle', which lies at the bottom of all the expressions of this view. The central concepts of a system of thought do not stand isolated and unrelated; on the contrary, they are interdependent, each illuminating and completing the other. Each concept finds its full explanation only in the others. But all the fundamental concepts of a system of thought are rooted in a formal principle, which informs the very thinking of a philosopher or theologian. This formal principle, from which all the concepts receive their unity and final intelligibility is the particular notion of being or reality a thinker has. This specific notion of being or reality necessarily includes one's implicit self understanding and the understanding of the world. We may call this particular notion of reality, the

thought pattern or the thought-form of a system or of a thinker. Often, this unifying and vivifying thought-form may not be expressed very clearly or in easily understandable concepts. But it has to be sought and found in and through the study of the expressions and concepts, because it remains the ever present background and horizon of all expressed statements.

In order to understand the system of Madhva from inside, we should try to analyse and discover his specific understanding of reality and see how in Dvaita Vedānta this understanding of being or thought-form informs and unifies its concepts and how it lies at the origin of all the expressed statements.

#### **(a) Madhva's Understanding of Being or Reality :**

In the first chapter and in the section of the chapter dealing with the causality of Viṣṇu, we referred to the mādhva definition of reality. For Madhva, reality is that which is the object of knowledge. In Dvaita Vedānta, knowledge always implies the subject-object distinction. Even when the subject knows itself, there is an objectivizing of the subject. Such an understanding of reality implies that reality is formally conceived as an object, as something that formally stands in opposition to the subject. The knower or the subject when formally considered under the aspect of reality or being, must be viewed in this relation of opposition to itself, that is, to the knowing subject. The same point may be expressed in another way : reality is objective, that is, to be, is to be an object of knowledge. Even Viṣṇu, when considered under the aspect of reality or being, is to be understood as the Supreme Object of vedic testimony.

To know in Dvaita Vedānta, does not primarily mean the transparent presence of reality to itself; rather, it means being in a relation of 'otherness-presence' to the knowing subject. Such an understanding of being or of reality may be termed 'cosmocentric'. that is, being is conceived on the model of

sensible beings existing in the world (cosmos). Doubtless, for Madhva, Viṣṇu is the apex in the hierarchy of beings. All finite realities depend on him. But the point at issue here, is the formal conception of reality and not the theocentrism of Dvaita Vedānta's ontological scheme.

It is true that Madhva relates being to knowledge. Being has the essential aspect of truth. Being is related to the spirit. Still we need to raise the question whether thought (of finite being, and a fortiori of Īśvara) is creative of being? Do beings exist, because Īśvara thinks them? Or does he think them, because they are? It is true that the Supreme Being knows all the beings in the most perfect manner. But the problem raised is whether he places them in existence. In fact Madhva's interpretation of the text 'māyā mātram idam sarvam' is perhaps an indication that Madhva unlike the other realistic thinkers of his time had an inkling into the problem we are discussing here. But still the problem remains whether the finite beings are only in the mind of Viṣṇu or truly from his "mind and will".

It has already been remarked that Madhva underplays the category of 'sāmānya' (commonness) Beings are at once similar and dissimilar to one another. There is no abstract, existing universality-Sāmānya really exists in the particular. In Dvaita Vedānta similarity is explained by means of the category of 'Sādrśya' and dissimilarity or better separation by 'bheda'. But the problem that arises is whether there is an ontological element that runs through all beings. The Advaitins affirm that below and behind the multiplicity and variety of beings, there is an unchanging and universal reality viz., Brahman. Madhva affirms that such a universal reality is inadmissible, for the very notion of being carries within it the factor of individuality. "Universal Being" does not exist. As far as I know, Madhva does not make a distinction between existents and existence. Only the existents are real and are known. Existence is only in the existents. Once



again what we see in these affirmations of Madhva is his basic cosmocentric conception of being.

We know that in Dvaita Vedānta being is substance. To be, is to be a substance. The attributes and action are aspects [of substances. In a being centred philosophy a distinction between the nature of the quiddity of the substance and the act by which it exists is made. Madhva takes existence for granted. He would have considered it unwarranted to speak of the existence of the existents, *Sattā* is a *viśeṣa* of the existent. It is not pure and simple existence, but the manifest being that comes to a reality in dependence on another. The substantial nature of a reality is more important than its existence, Once again the cosmocentric understanding (conception) of reality is at work in these conceptions.

Dvaita Vedānta thinks that space and time enter into our understanding of being. A being was, is or will be. A being exists in space. In Dvaita Vedānta time and space are material substances. They are the evolutes of matter. They are neither transcendental categories of the mind nor realities which though formally only in the mind have a real basis in the material things. Time and space exist apart from and independently of the beings existing in them. Time is conceived on the model of space. Space is thought of as a container in which beings exist. Both time and space are endowed with parts. But eternity is partless. So when Madhva tells us that reality is marked by time and space, he means to say that every reality has a relation of contained to the container, to these two all pervading substances. They do not intrinsically condition the beings in them. From this short analysis of some of the basic teachings of Madhva it is clear that Madhva's understanding of reality is 'objectivistic' and substance and individual oriented. But such a formal cosmocentric conception of being can exist side by side with an ontological theocentrism. An analysis of Saṅkara's formal understanding of



reality will show that he is more subject and spirit centred. In the analysis of consciousness, Śaṅkara emphasises the awareness of undifferentiated being. Rāmānuja stresses the oneness of being but qualified by relations. Madhva insists on the difference between subject and object substance and *viśeṣas*, in short on the individuality and separateness of reality.

### Madhva's Understanding of the Supreme Being

Madhva's philosophical conception of the Supreme Being is rooted in his specific understanding of being or reality. All realities as realities are univocal. All are alike. The Supreme Being's transcendence is not expressed by means of the analogy of being, but by making Viṣṇu a '*tattva sui generis*', with certain specific attributes. There is no overarching idea of being. In a system of thought that is object centred, the reality of infinity and finitude are expressed with the help of the categories of great and small. For Madhva, Viṣṇu is the greatest reality, the supreme object of knowledge; all other beings are small. Transcendence, in the final analysis is not the total otherness in being, the otherness in existence itself, but the fact of being the greatest in a hierarchy of existents. The Supreme Being alone possesses certain *viśeṣas*. The immanence of the Lord in the finite beings is conceived as a sort of co-presence of two beings; the presence of a superior being in an inferior reality. Reading through the texts of Madhva, one gets the impression that '*bhakti*' is considered as a means of placating and pleasing a superior being. This becomes clear when we take into consideration the doctrine that the '*prasāda*' or '*anugraha*' of the Lord also appears as an extrinsic help. The gods do not forfeit their fitness for *mukti* by sin. Moreover, there is no idea of pure gratuity in Madhva's system. As a religious person Madhva with his deep experience of the Lord would certainly have felt this transforming action and his response to him in a much more intimate manner. But the philosophical expression of that experience, based as

it is on his thought form does not bring out fully the depth of that experience.

The Supreme Being's independence and the finite realities dependence are two central concepts in the system of Madhva. Very often Viṣṇu's independence is compared to the independence of a king. To Madhva's mind independence is that endowment of a person which makes him free from all external coercion. No one can take away anything from him. He can acquire and possess whatever he wants or desires. He has the power to exercise his influence and sway over others. He can do whatever he wants. He can deprive others of their possessions and force them to do his will. In one way, whatever the subjects of a king possess are from him. Often Madhva seems to describe the 'svātantrya' of the Lord in these "royal" terms. Certainly as a person who has experienced Viṣṇu, Madhva's religious insight seems to be much deeper. Ofcourse, Madhva says that an independent being does not depend on another as regards its *sattā*, *pravṛtti* and *pramiti*. But we know, what *sattā* means in the writings of Madhva. Unfortunately, Dvaita Vedānta does not distinguish moral freedom from metaphysical freedom. A being can have the capacity to make choices and yet be metaphysically dependent on another. A being is said to be metaphysically free if its being is of and from itself. Supreme freedom is a way of existing which enables a reality to be in-itself, for-itself and of-itself. Supreme freedom is supreme responsibility. In Madhva's thought, Viṣṇu is certainly in, for and of himself. But this insight is not fully brought out, because of the extrinsic analogy of the king and because of the object centred notion of being which is the background of his understanding of the Supreme Reality.

### **Madhva's Thought at a Glance :**

The history of vedantic systems has been marked by persistent controversies. In fact Advaita and Dvaita Vedānta form the two extreme poles of vedantic thought, and they

constantly refuted each other's doctrines. There were other vedantic schools like Viśiṣṭādvaita and Suddhādvaita which opposed the advaita teachings. But those schools showed a tendency to espouse the central teaching of Advaita, viz. the oneness of reality. Though they wanted to defend the reality of the Many and thus defend the religion of genuine 'bhakti' and 'mukti', still it is Madhva who pushes to the lost logical consequences the anti-advaitic efforts of the earlier thinkers. From the time the upaniṣadic sages uttered their experience of and insight into the oneness of reality without a second, and the oneness of the cosmic spirit and the individual soul, the Hindu thought has shown a fascination for the quest of that one reality without a second. Madhva too is a searcher after that incomparable reality. But he breaks away from the spell of Advaita and chalks out a line of thought in which the One and the Many are considered real and true, Madhva does not want to devalue the Many because of the infinity and Truth of the One. In fact the reality, truth and powers of the Many depend on the One. The "Oneness" between the infinite reality and the individual spirit does not cancel out the reality of the individual. Dvaita Vedānta is not dualism as understood in the classical tradition of the West. Madhva does not accept the existence of two independent absolute principles; one good and the other, evil. Neither does he teach that the Many are independent of the One. For Madhva 'Dvaita' stands for the truth and reality of the One and the Many, though the Many are dependent on the Supreme Being.

The Dvaita of Madhva implies also the acceptance of the truth of being and becoming. He is not ready to grant reality only to the unchangeable one. The changing and becoming realities are also real. Dvaita Vedānta shows a radical opposition to the advaitic conception of the levels of truth and reality, though it is ready to accept a hierarchy of existents.

Dvaita Vedānta teaches also that at the level of knowledge, duality between the subject and object should be accepted. This is because at the ontological level subject and object are different. Even in the Lord's knowledge this duality remains. All cognitions are characterized by the two poles of subject and object. At the same time, space and time are related to reality and knowledge. Time and space are real and they have an essential role to play in the 'dvaita' understanding of realism and pluralism.

According to Madhva, there are material and spiritual realities. Though matter and spirit possess opposing qualities, still they can enter into a union which makes human life and activity possible. This union is possible because matter and all finite spirits are dependent on the Lord, who alone is supremely independent. According to Madhva, the light of the sākṣin can penetrate matter and reveal its reality to the spirit. It is the dependence of matter on the Lord which makes all these possible.

The Many of Dvaita Vedānta do not form a haphazard multiplicity. The number-less finite beings form a well ordered and interrelated hierarchy under Viṣṇu. All finite spirits are the reflections of Viṣṇu. The material beings somehow manifest the order and the hierarchic nature of the spirits. In each being the Lord dwells; to each he grants powers and activities. Entering into each being he manifests his powers and activities through it. Manifest existence, life, activity and change and knowledge come from the Supreme Being. All finite beings manifest the infinite and inexhaustibly rich Lord.

The universe is the revelation of the infinite riches of the Lord. Yet the Vedas and each of its syllables form the supreme revelation of the Lord. Though the Veda transcends our ordinary time, yet each vedic syllable and word can primarily signify the Lord because they are in his mind. Each

syllable manifests one aspect of the Lord. The realities of the world are patterned on the realities signified by the vedic words. In fact the same supreme intellect and will of the Lord are at work in the Veda, in the language of man and in the realities of the world. In the last analysis it is on this activity of the Lord, the reality and truth of the world and the objectivity of our knowledge depend. Ultimately, it is the Sāskṣin, which reveals and testifies to these ultimate truths.



## APPENDIX 1

### **The Different Categories of Finite, Spritual Beings :**

First of all we can divide them into two main classes. Among all these innumerable sp. substances there is only one being, which though finite and dependent on Viṣṇu has never tasted suffering and will never taste it. This being is Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu. She forms a class of her own. All the other spritual beings are either experiencing pain in this universe or have experienced suffering in the past.

*Lakṣmī* : She is known also by such names as Ramā, Intelligent prakṛti (Bh. Gī. Bh. XII, 3-4). She is eternal. Lakṣmī is superior to all the other divine beings and is inferior to Viṣṇu alone. Thus she forms a class of her own and she can be understood only if we view her both in her relation to Viṣṇu and to other beings. 'Even the gods such as Brahmā, etc. are perishable because their bodies are subject to destruction; but Lakṣmī is imperishable because her body is imperishable'. She is in an eternally 'liberated' state because she is in a state of union with Viṣṇu from beginningless time. Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī exist together and they are eternally blessed and perfect; in her the Supreme Being rejoiced and in him Prakṛti (Lakṣmī) rejoiced. Still, she is always dependent on her Lord. Her knowledge is eternal, non-reflective and all embracing though she cannot fully comprehend the essence of Viṣṇu. It is always true, though dependent on Viṣṇu. She has cosmic and salvific functions in the world. In this sense we must say that Lakṣmī has a certain subordinate role to play in human life. The second group, i. e. all the other finite spritual substances, fall into many different groups, such as gods, men, demons etc.

*The Gods* : The gods are finite spritual substances who, immediately because of their 'karma' and mediately because

of their nature have become gods. The gods themselves belong to different classes such as Brahmā, Śeṣa, Vāyu, Gandharva, etc; to different castes since there are, 'Brāhmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra gods. Like men, they are also bound to perform their duties in accordance with their age and station in life. The gods have a subordinate part to play in the work of 'creation etc'. They have also a presiding function to perform in the world. Man's senses and the objects of knowledge are presided over by the various gods. The elements of the world on which and with which man has to work are also under the sway of the gods. The strength of the medicinal herbs, comes from the gods dwelling in them. The gods thus are endowed with extraordinary powers and faculties. But it must never be forgotten that they are completely dependent upon Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is the inner controller of all the gods.

Their salvific function consists in their being the privileged objects of our meditation. Since Viṣṇu dwells in them, and gives them strength and activity one can contemplate Viṣṇu in them in a special way; but they should never be worshipped in themselves. This is a great sin.

Among the gods there is a strict hierarchical order. The different types of gods live in different worlds. The gods themselves must seek and work for liberation.

Between the gods and man there is the irreversible relationship of 'guru' and disciple, (sarvepi (gods) guravaśca etc. puruṣasya sadaiva hi. AV. III. 4.248). At the order of Vāsu-deva, they enter into the souls of men and induce them to do good and evil (deeds) in accordance with their past deeds. (Vāsudevājñayā caiva pūrvakarmanusārataḥ prerayanti hi te jīvān puṇyapāpeṣu nityaśah).

*The Demons* : These are also finite spiritual beings, though they are not fit to reach liberation. They possess extraordinary powers and they can influence human life by possessing

man etc. Usually their bodies are invisible, though they can take on human forms in order to lead bad men astray.

The whole world is seen by Madhva as a field in which gods and demons move about and act. They are like petty chieftains in a big empire, some against the emperor, others for him, though the emperor because of his extraordinary power has full control over all of them. We men are the subjects or the ordinary citizens who must be on our guard to please and to placate or to defend ourselves against all the different groups.

## APPENDIX 2

### Theism and Karma

Madhva's effort to harmonise the karma-doctrine with his theism deserves a little more study. N. Macnicol, in his book "Indian Theism" makes a few perceptive reflections on the implications of the karma doctrine on theism. (1) "The presence of the karma doctrine confronts theism in its effort to unfold its meaning with the difficulty, for example, of finding a place for a personal God in the midst of this iron framework, which so grips the universe. (2) It presents it further with the problem of explaining the relation of a free ethical personality, such as theism postulates to its rigid legalism. (3) It also opposed its goal of a negative release to the theistic hope of a blessed fellowship with God." (p. 224ff.)

N. Macnicol continues : "it is obvious that it is not easy to find any place for God that is worthy of him within such a mechanical system of requital as that of karma. For Indian Theism, God is either one who has to yield to it, or one to whom it has to yield; in either case the deity emerges maimed." (p. 225) Not only the deity but also man emerges maimed.

Madhva's system is a very good illustration of the truth of these remarks. In Madhva, for a time, karma and Viṣṇu play the game of hide and seek. But at the end, karma, and also 'the eternal' nature of the soul must yield to the power of Viṣṇu in one sense. God is said to cause souls to do good or evil as he pleases. This would make God's action irresponsible and capricious. On the other hand, Madhva's statement that God acts in accordance with the 'karma' and the inner nature of each soul, would limit the freedom of God, or make him responsible for the lot of the mukti-ayogya jivas. Madhva was very conscious of the pervasion of evil in the

world. He certainly knew of the malice of men. The hearts of some seemed to be filled with pride and blasphemy. The mysterious enmeshment of man in evil, his refusal to repent and be converted, Madhva thought could be understood only if we accept that some natures were evil.

Historically, the karma theory was developed before and apart from theism. Karma doctrine and the belief in transmigration are inextricably bound together, because the former had been thought out to explain the problem of evil, inequality and retribution, in the most general sense of the word, in an inner-worldly manner. Since the doctrine became a part of the Sacred tradition, it was never abandoned by the later theists, but was combined with the doctrine of a personal Supreme Being into a not very harmonious synthesis. (Cf. 1. Puthiadam. *The Hindu doctrine of karma. Part I & II. Theoria to Theory* Vol. 13 pp. 295-311 and Vol 14. pp. 65-74 and the Hindu Doctrine of karma and The Chritian Faith in Grace in *Divine Grace and Human Response*, Ed. C. M. Vadakkekara)



## APPENDIX 3

### Madhva and Image Worship

Among the good actions which the devotees of Viṣṇu must perform, the worship of Viṣṇu's images occupies a special place. (For the legends connected with the 'miraculous finding of Viṣṇu's image by Madhva—Vide : Von Glasenapp, pp. 82-84). In his work entitled 'Tantrasārasaṁgrah', Madhva gives detailed instructions on the making of images, the ceremonies connected with their anointing and installation and on the various rituals which are to be performed before them. Madhva accepts also the legitimacy of the honour paid to the images of other minor deities. It is very difficult to see what exactly is the place occupied by Viṣṇu's images in the religious thought of Madhva. Madhva's comments on B. S. IV, 1. 4 may help us to understand a little his mind on the worship of symbols in general. The Ch. Up. VII, 1.5. tells us : 'meditate on 'Name' as Brahman'.

According to Trivikrama the word 'name' should be taken as 'name etc., which are of the nature of symbols or images' (Pratimātmake nāmāḍau). The problem which Madhva tries to solve is this : should the 'name or the verse' (image or symbol) (pratīka) be contemplated as identical with Viṣṇu ?

Madhva says that the 'name' (pratīka-symbol, image) is in no way identical with Viṣṇu. But Viṣṇu is present in the 'pratīka' and so the sacred texts ask us to contemplate the indwelling Viṣṇu. When that which is not really Viṣṇu, is contemplated as Viṣṇu, there arises great sin and such false worshippers go to hell (Trivikrama). In order to prove this point he quotes a verse from Upāsanānirṇaya.

pratimādyam Haritvena prthivyādyam athāpi vā  
indriyaprāṇi jīvādyam athavā ya upāsate  
mithyopāstimatām teṣāṁ niṣkṛtir na kadācana  
atiduhkhē patanti...

In this verse, the worship of the image as Viṣṇu is condemned. The Ch. Up. Bh. VII. 4.14 tells us that a king kills the man who pays honours to the servant of the king. The servant, being dependent on the king does not deserve royal honours. In a similar manner, Viṣṇu sends those souls to "the blind darkness" who worship the god Brahmā and other beings as Viṣṇu (brahmarūpeṇa). From these lines it is quite clear that Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu alone should be worshipped and meditated upon as the absolute being. One of the truths which must be known in order to reach final liberation is the non-distinction of Viṣṇu from his manifestations. Madhva, however, never states that the image of Viṣṇu is identical with Viṣṇu. Rāmānuja for example speaks of the 'descent of Viṣṇu into the images' (arcāvatāra) when the image is consecrated and installed. But in Madhva, we do not find any such idea of 'the descent of Viṣṇu into images'. From these scanty indications we cannot reach any sure conclusion as to Madhva's idea about the nature of the 'installed or miraculously found image' of Viṣṇu. Perhaps he does not teach anything more than that the image of Viṣṇu is a specially privileged object of our meditation, because he is specially present in them.

AV. I. 1.23. warns the bhakta that he should not take his self or even a "divinity" and consciously or unconsciously identify this "symbol" with the Lord (also AV. IV. 1.19). This is a great sin. God, though omnipotent, cannot will something against his Lordship. (AV. III. 2.140) The true devotee thinks only of the presence of the Lord in the image or symbol, or of the power of Viṣṇu residing in the god whom he invokes.

## APPENDIX 4

### Upāsana

Upāsana in its ordinary sense means service or religious worship. It has also the meaning of religious reflection or meditation. It may be of some interest for us to analyse the mādхва idea of upāsana in order to point out his substantialistic way of thinking which he has taken over from the Purāṇas (P. Hacker, *Prahlād...*, Vol. I. P. 107 ff). Upāsana, says Trivikrama can be of two types : the first type consists in the study of the sacred texts (*śāstrābhyāsarūpiṇī Tat. Di. p. 347*). Brahman (Viṣṇu) is the central theme of the entire sacred tradition and it is only through the study of the sacred texts, one can reach the sure knowledge of Viṣṇu. The second type of upāsana begins once we have acquired a sufficient and sure knowledge of Viṣṇu from the sacred texts.

This type of Upāsana is of the nature of dhyāna, meditation. Viṣṇu, with all his infinite attributes is the object of this meditation. All souls are not fit to meditate on all the attributes. Only Brahmā is eligible to meditate on all the attributes of Viṣṇu. But all the souls desiring to reach 'mukti' must contemplate Viṣṇu's primary attributes : being, knowledge and bliss (*sat, cit, ānanda*; III. 3. 11). Madhva repeatedly tells us that all souls which seek bliss (liberation) must necessarily meditate on the bliss of Viṣṇu.

Between the end we intend to attain and the means we use, there must be some similarity. So, if we are desirous of reaching bliss, then we must, in our meditation concentrate our attention on the bliss of Viṣṇu (III. 3. 12). Later, in his commentary on sūtra 19, Madhva says that the release we seek is 'other-worldly' (*alaukika*) and so the 'upāsana-meditation' we practise must also be other-worldly, i. e.; we must take the other worldly qualities of Viṣṇu as objects of meditation.

In the *Puruṣasūkta* (R. V. X., 90.13) it is said that the moon arose from the spirit of *Puruṣa*, the sun sprang from his eye, *Indra* and *Agni* from his mouth etc. *Madhva*, after identifying the *Puruṣa* of this *sūkta* with *Viṣṇu*, tells us that these gods should contemplate the various members of the Lord from out of which they arose in order to reach release. For these gods release consists in returning to their source of origin (IV. 1.6). In order to reach its final end, each soul must contemplate *Viṣṇu* in the way proper to it. If an ascetic were to contemplate the attribute of severity which comes into play when *Viṣṇu* punishes the wicked, the ascetic would bring on himself evil results.

The thought underlying these statements is very informative. *Viṣṇu*, his attributes and the members of his body are thought of as 'saving substances' in which a devotee through intense meditation can participate. By the constant concentration of one's mind on an attribute of *Viṣṇu*, e. g. bliss, the soul itself becomes blissful. The 'bliss-substance' of *Viṣṇu* passes on to the soul through the channel of *upāṣana*. This participation in the bliss, knowledge of *Viṣṇu* grows till one reaches release.

## APPENDIX 5

### Prasāda, Prīti, Anugraha

The "favour" (anugraha, prasāda, prīti) of the teacher is the principal cause which enables the student to acquire knowledge. The 'prasāda or prīti' of a king is the reason for the wealth of his servants, for the freedom of the prisoners etc. (VTV No. 114, AV, 41-42). The 'anugraha' of the rain-god produces vegetation here on earth. In all these cases 'anugraha or favour' is realistically conceived, and it produces a real result. The 'prasāda or anugraha' of Viṣṇu is the principal cause of the existence of all beings. 'dravyam karma ca....yadanugrahataḥ santi na santi yadupekṣayā' (AV. 13). It is also the cause of the final release of souls. (Bh. Gī. Bh. II. 23-25). The acknowledgement of Viṣṇu's superiority is the means to obtain his favour, is a point which is stressed by Madhva and his two commentators. (Vide-VTV. nos. 115, 116; Bh. II. 23-25; Kath up Bh. p. 20 etc.)

The statement 'tatprasādāt tu tasya hi ādhikyaṃ jñāyate' is a quotation from an unknown source. This statement is immediately completed by the affirmation that Viṣṇu's grace is received by one who knows the supremacy of Viṣṇu. (Kath Up Bh. p. 20). Jayatīrtha in N. S. I. 1.11 seems to make a distinction between "anugraha" and "prasāda". By the performance of actions (karma) we obtain only "anugraha". This type of favour can bring about only rebirth in a temporary paradise. This grace is inferior. But real "prasāda" grants one definitive release. Though "anugraha" is called prasāda, still it is termed "adhama prasāda". But in Madhva's writings often "anugraha" and "prasāda" seem to be interchangeable terms.



## APPENDIX 6

### Sin and Hell

In this short note I want to examine very briefly the mādхва understanding of pāpa (sin) adharmā (evil conduct) and doṣa (evil). Madhva calls Viṣṇu the consuming fire of the sinners and the shade of those who know (in our context who sacrifices to Viṣṇu). Here the expression, 'sinner' is contrasted with the expression 'the knower of Viṣṇu or the one who offers sacrifices to Viṣṇu'. This shows that the sinner who is consumed by Viṣṇu, does not 'know' Viṣṇu and does not offer the prescribed sacrifices to him.

The commentary on Bh. Gī. 3.37 says that 'desire' (kāma) is the root of all evil, because it brings about all inauspiciousness (anartha). Jayatīrtha understands this sentence of Madhva thus : 'Desire is the great inducer (preraka) to evils, the cause of such sins as the murder of Brāhmins, and the great enemy of man's highest end, release.' Madhva and Jayatīrtha distinguish between the root of the deed and the deed itself. Both agree that the underlying disposition of inordinate desire is the greatest enemy of man. But the most interesting point for us here is that evil in man is viewed as an enemy of man's supreme good, viz., the attainment of his final liberation. (Pr. Di. on Bh. Gī. Bh. 3.37).

When Madhva speaks of good conduct and bad conduct (dharma and adharmā) he seems to view man's actions from the point of view of the duties prescribed by the sacred texts. One's entire and desireless conformity with the prescribed order : caste duties and the duties of one's state of life—is dharma. The opposite of it is adharmā. As we have seen in the second chapter, Madhva has tried to establish the absoluteness of dharma on the impersonal character of the Vedas. But in a curious passage, in fact, a citation from Padma

Purāna, Madhva states that the nature of 'dharma' is peculiar or varied (dharmaśvarūpo vicitraḥ); whatever is acceptable to the gods is right because they are not like the beings of this world (BSBh. III. 4.33).

Jayatīrtha thinks that right conduct is that which the knowers of truth perform. This means that the opposite is wrong. It is through righteous conduct one reaches release. Madhva speaks also of doṣa (evil) which should not even be mentioned (vacanāyogyā) because as Jayatīrtha says it is harmful to others (paropadravahetuvāt). While dealing with the nature of bondage, Madhva says that the ignorant and wicked souls consider themselves to be independent. They even dare to steal the very divinity from Viṣṇu. Here "Sin" is self idolatry. So Madhva's idea of moral evil or sin is by no means simple. Evil implies an attitude and an action in opposition to the majesty of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is not truly known and his supremacy is not humbly acknowledged. Evil implies also the absurd fact that it is against the sinner's own highest good. Evil seems to be related to other souls too. In the system of madhva, the root of all evil is ignorance; the ignorance of Viṣṇu and of the right order of things. The difficulty of this concept of 'moral evil' is to be sought in the moral responsibility of the sinner. The ideas of karma the svarūpabhedavāda and the view that Viṣṇu alone is the cause of all actions appear to leave no room for personal freedom and hence for personal responsibility. Still we know that according Madhva, the souls possess limited freedom. Madhva admits grades in the sinfulness of evil deeds. This is clear from the fact that all wicked souls are not punished in the same manner.

But I have the strong feeling that neither Madhva nor his commentators have seriously and systematically reflected on the nature and depth of human sinfulness. A real, existential idea of sin necessarily implies a strong person-centred thinking. Madhva, inspite of his realism, and inspite of his insistence on the reality of the souls, remain a cosmocentric

thinker. This is the reason why the reality of sin gets only such scant attention both in his views on bondage and on liberation. His views on sin, however, offers important points of contact for a Hindu-Christian conversation on the nature of God and man. For him sin is ultimately self idolatry and disobedience.

*Hell*: It has often been mentioned that Madhva holds the view that some souls are destined to go to hell. Madhva himself does not use the words 'destined to go to hell'. His terminology is less 'personal' souls unfit for release' or souls fit for "the darkness" (*muktyayogyāh*, *tamoyogyāh*). Whether we can speak of a *mādhva* theory of predestination is discussed elsewhere. The souls which are fit for 'the darkness' cannot be saved. Even the little good they might happen to perform while wandering in this world cannot bring them anything more than some temporary happiness. Since Viṣṇu rules and conducts each soul according to its nature, the wicked souls are so ruled and conducted that these always remain within the bounds of their wicked nature. The *Avatāras* of Viṣṇu by simulated actions lead them astray, from the saving truth. These souls are given over to ignorance, desire, pride and when their evil is ripe in accordance with their nature, they sink down to hell. Madhva accepts the existence of many hells. The deepest is the most horrible of all. The eternity of the deepest hell is also accepted by Madhva. Though Viṣṇu is present even in hell. still in the deepest hell there is not even a drop of pleasure.

## APPENDIX 7

### The Idea of Predestination

Both Von Glasenapp and Ml. Siauve speak of the 'souls destined by Viṣṇu' to go to hell or to liberation. The problem which I want to touch upon here is : does Madhva really teach a theory of predestination ? It is clear that Madhva teaches in very explicit terms that souls are divided into different and irreducible classes. Some are fit to reach release and others are unfit for release. This theory in itself does not imply the idea of theological predestination. In order to find a just solution to our problem, we must look into two series of data.

*The First Set of Data :* The mādhva idea that Viṣṇu alone is the independent Being and consequently all the other beings are dependent on Viṣṇu as regards their nature (essential nature—svarūpa) action (pravṛtti) and knowledge (pramiti) may make us think that according to Madhva, Viṣṇu determines the essential nature and actions of a being. In fact Madhva affirms that Viṣṇu alone is the agent of all the activities of the soul and if any one thinks that he is an independent agent and persists in this view he is sure to go to hell. Again, Madhva is convinced that the souls can reach their final end only through the 'favour' of Viṣṇu and he grants 'this favour' only to those whom he chooses. Madhva is never tired of quoting Kath. Up. II. 22: "by him, whom he (the Absolute Being) chooses the final end ( V himself ) is attained". Here Madhva seems to express the idea of a divine election to bliss. Viṣṇu is again said to be the giver of knowledge to the ignorant, the giver of release to the knowers of Viṣṇu, and the giver of bliss to the released (AV 15). Madhva's commentary on word 'atah' (therefore 'occurring in the first Sūtra of the B. S. 'now therefore an enquiry into Brahman)

says that divine favour is the effective cause of our enquiry into Brahman. If we put these data together we have an impressive amount of material which makes it legitimate to speak of a mādharma idea of predestination. Viṣṇu seems to predestine souls to bliss or to perdition in as much as the nature, i. e., the good or bad nature of the souls and their actions depend on him.

*The Second Set of Data :* But the above texts should be placed by the side of another set of data and they together should be evaluated in the general context of Madhva's system. First of all let us recall to our mind that dependence of the souls on Viṣṇu is not conceived in the order of existence. We have already remarked that Madhva implicitly distinguishes between 'causality' and 'dependence'. The subjects of a king are dependent on him, though he is not their ontological cause. So also the souls are dependent on Viṣṇu though they are not said to be ontologically constituted by Viṣṇu. The souls and Viṣṇu are coeternal, though the souls are eternally dependent on him. Madhva has never said that Viṣṇu has made the good souls good and the bad souls bad by a creative act of his omnipotence.

Again, according to the teaching of Madhva, Viṣṇu's work of ruling and guiding the world and especially the souls consists in keeping the various beings within the limits of their individual nature. Viṣṇu has not created those natures, he does not change them either. Viṣṇu is impartial in the sense that he does not send souls to 'hell' or 'heaven' according to his pleasure. He lets the wicked souls fall into hell because they are wicked. "He whom he chooses attains him", does not mean that the act of choice makes them worthy of final bliss. He chooses those who are worthy and the worthy are worthy by nature. Viṣṇu makes the good souls act in the right manner and the bad souls in the wrong way.

Now if we take these two sets of data together we find that Madhva's theory of the classes of souls cannot be called



a theory of predestination. In fact Viṣṇu does not predestine any one to bliss or to perdition; he sees to it that each one gets what he deserves. Any theory of predestination presupposes a theology based on creation and on the absolute gratuitousness of grace. Even though we must admit that some of the statements of Madhva and especially his idea of the absolute supremacy of Viṣṇu seem to depart from the general Hindu tradition, still as Von Glasenapp has clearly shown, they are explicable from Indian tradition. Since Madhva's view on our present subject is so ambivalent that we cannot, without great reservation speak of a mādhva theory of predestination.

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